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ANCIENT CHURCH:

ITS

HISTORY, DOCTRINE, WORSHIP, AND CONSTITUTION,

TRACED FOR THE FIRST THREE HUNDRED YEARS

BY

W. D. KILLEN, D.D.,

PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY IN THE IRISH ASSEMBLY'S COLLEGE, BELFAST, AND PRESIDENT OF THE FACULTY.

"Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God."

PSALM lxxxvii. 3.

A NEW EDITION, CAREFULLY REVISED,

WITH A PREFACE

BY JOHN HALL, D.D.,

Minister Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York.

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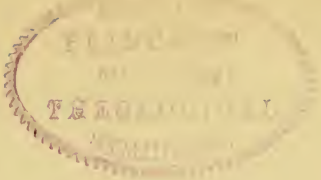

PREFACE.

It is not to be wondered at that in an age which busies itself about the beginnings of things, there should be given renewed attention to the early history of the Christian Church. They who deem religious life in a decaying state must find it difficult to reconcile with their view the amount of learning and of mental activity devoted to this department of knowledge. If the law of demand and supply works with the uniformity commonly ascribed to it, there never were so many persons as in our time keenly interested in the Genesis of the Christian Church. In England, in Germany, even in France, and in our own country, the foremost minds are occupied with questions regarding the institutions, the development, and the early struggles of a community now making itself felt in every part of the world where there is any intellectual life, or indeed any human activity. It is not surely presumptuous to hope that permanent good will come from so many minds being brought again into contact with the Son of God on earth, and with His apostles, at that crisis of human history when their words and their deeds were the germs of permanent and blessed institutions.

It is the special commendation of History, that it widens the field of our observation, and enables us to see how great principles—which, like great bodies, move slowly—work themselves out in congenial results. It would have been difficult, probably, to convince a well-to-do young Hebrew in the later years of Solomon's reign, when the precious metals were as stones in the street, when foreign fashions were ruling society in Jerusalem, that God-fearing was essential to prosperity, and that the religion of the fathers must be maintained in order to national dignity and prosperity. But it is only needful to glance over the history of Solomon's successor to see how soon evil seeds bring forth evil fruit, and how departure from God in-

volves the loss of the best social and national blessings. Just so it may sometimes seem to a hasty reader of the Epistles, as if little things attracted disproportionate attention from the apostles—as for example, the eating of "things offered to idols"—but a moderate study of the early Church's history corrects the impression, and shows that a trifling trend in one generation may be a decided and irresistible movement in the next. A "false view" of a quarter of an inch at the muzzle of the gun will mean the striking of the shot many feet from the target.

For many reasons it is desirable that those who forego any approach to an oligarchy in the Church, and who hold by a Government at once independent of the State, and in the line of popular civil self-government, should be acquainted with the annals of the early Church. The foregoing description does not by any means include Presbyterians only. The overwhelming majority of the Protestant Christians of the United States are agreed as to the parity of the clergy, and the seeming exception in the Methodist Episcopal Church is more apparent than real, for a bishop in that great and useful branch of the Church is not much different in form and power from the "superintendents" in whom Reformers in Scotland saw no peril, indeed, not essentially different from synodical missionaries working in concert with Boards and Presbyteries in the newer fields of the West.[1] Whatever may be guarded in name from the appearance of legislative or executive authority, in an "Association" among our Baptist and Congregational brethren, any Presbyterian admitted thereto by courtesy finds the substance of the action of his Presbytery reproduced, even as the New England deacon is the exact counterpart of an old-world Presbyterian Elder. Perhaps it is not the mere hope of an eager partisan, that, as independent activity of mind makes itself felt throughout the country, the moral influence of the Association or the Presbytery will be found more and more important to the preservation of such denominational unity as renders close and comfortable organic co-operation possible. But whether this hope be realized or not, whether or not it be justifiable, every intelligent Presbyterian must be glad that in

[1] The Wesleyan Methodists of England, after much discussion, have admitted others than ministers to the governing council of the denomination.

the working of the churches, the lines of his church government are followed so closely by those who, like our Baptist brethren, hold so much in common with him of the great Evangelical system of truth.

The author whose *Ancient Church* herewith goes to a second American edition, after a brief but remarkably useful pastoral life, was called to the Professorship of Church History in the Presbyterian College, Belfast, and a large proportion of the clergy of the Irish Presbyterian Church have caught the spirit of his Lectures on "Church History" and "Pastoral Theology." The associate of Dr. Wilson, a clear writer on Baptism, of Dr. Cooke, as earnest and evangelical as he was eloquent, and of Dr. Murphy, who still lives to do the work of a good teacher and an able commentator, and of others like-minded, he has helped to train a body of ministers inferior to none in Christendom, and to guide the counsels of a church which, under many forms of social repression and political disadvantage, has made Ulster a vivid exception to the unrest and the misery of the other three provinces of Ireland, and from which no mean element of American Presbyterianism has drawn its blood and its inspiration.

Dr. Killen is a pronounced Presbyterian, but not from mere hereditary leaning; but, as the lawyers say, "for cause." It will be found, however, that the views here illustrated from the early centuries of our era are not now confined to scholars of his class. No more evangelical teacher ever preached and wrote in the pale of the English Church than Dr. Thomas Scott, whose Commentary combines in a high degree just interpretation with devout feeling and moderation of judgment. He did not hesitate, while a minister of the Anglican Establishment, to commit his Commentary to the truth, that among Ephesian and Philippian Christians in Paul's time, Presbyter and Bishop were names of the same church officer. Scott, indeed, was not recognized as a great scholar. Since the issue of Dr. Killen's first edition of this work, however, a marked change has taken place from a variety of causes, not among historians only, but among critics. The language of the earlier traditions and chronicles—formulated when diocesan Episcopacy had become as thoroughly established as the doctrines of Rome, and which gave to every believing man mentioned in

the New Testament a place as "Bishop"—this language had been read without hesitation in the prelatic sense. The honest admissions however of Ellicott, Lightfoot, and others of undoubted scholarship, in which Scott's views are endorsed, and prelacy in the Church is made to be post-apostolic, have entirely changed the form of expression, and even in Great Britain, where the Episcopal system is deeply rooted, and incorporated with the State, have given some color to the suggestion, that England would ultimately come to a modified Presbyterianism. The opening sentence of Dean Stanley's chapter on "the clergy" (*Christian Institutions*), expresses the received views of scholars. "It is certain that throughout the first century, and for the first years of the second, that is, through the later chapters of the Acts, the Apostolical Epistles, and the writings of Clement and Hermas, Bishop and Presbyter were convertible terms, and that the body of men so called were the rulers—so far as any permanent rulers existed of the early Church." And while there is much in statement and in omission in this last work of Dean Stanley, to grieve evangelical people who were attracted by his genial character, there is timely truth in the sentence:[1] "It is certain that in no instance before the beginning of the third century, the title or function of the Pagan or Jewish Priesthood is applied to Christian pastors." With much learning, and with some natural desire to make the best showing possible for modern "orders," Mr. Hatch, of Oxford, yet shows that, "when the organization of the churches was more complete, it is clear that the jurisdiction belonged to the council of Presbyters."[2] So, "it is clear," he concludes, "that the Presbyters of the primitive churches did not necessarily teach. They were not debarred from teaching, but if they taught as well as ruled, they combined two offices." Nor is it improper to quote the following sentence from Mr. Hatch, as embodying the very idea which Dr. Killen delights to illustrate. "When the Episcopal system had established itself, there was a bishop wherever in later times there would have been a parish church. From the small province of Proconsular Asia, which was about the size of Lincolnshire, forty-two bishops

[1] "Christian Institutes," p. 208.

[2] "The Organization of the Early Churches," Bampton Lecture, 1880.

were present at an early council: in the only half-converted province of North Africa, four hundred and seventy Episcopal towns are known by name."[1] In other words the teaching elder of each congregation was a bishop; he had no earthly superior. Hence Mr. Hatch justly adds: "It is therefore reasonable to expect that the bishop, as the chief officer of the community, presided wherever the community met together." It is not only reasonable, it is certain. Just so the Reformed Churches of the Presbyterian order have it until this day, in Europe, Asia, and America. In the same line with Stanley, Mr. Hatch says: "The names by which they (church officers) are designated are various but interchangeable; and their variety is probably to be explained by the fact that the same officer, or officers having equivalent rank, had various functions." In the course of the second century indeed, one of the names comes to be appropriated to a single officer. We are now in the second century of American Independence. If in future ages, we should in the matter of government, become copyists of European monarchies, it will be enough surely for the opponents of the policy to show the principles that ruled us from 1776 to 1876, and to claim that model as the original Republic, the primitive United States; and their argument would not be impaired by its being shown that undue power was allowed to pass into single hands in the course of the second, or the third century of our history.

It is not of course contended by Dr. Killen, or any other intelligent Presbyterian, that the Presbytery, with moderator, clerk, and all minute details of arrangement, are set down in the pastoral Epistles. All that is contended for is that principles are indicated, guarded, illustrated, and enforced, the development of which in a body of Christian people, uninfluenced by outside forces like the State, or by unspiritual aims like the love of pre-eminence, or the desire to be like civil governments, would imply parity of the ministry, plurality of elders in a single congregation, and the representation of the people in church courts. There is in the nature of the case in any community a principle of evolution; but it does not reverse elementary principles. There was no State-house, nor capitol at Washington, when the Thirteen States were constituted a Nation, but

[1] p. 78.

nothing since that time has been allowed to reverse the Constitution of the Republic.

We venture to hope that Dr. Killen's book, as it is intelligible by the ordinary capacity, will have an interested body of readers outside the ranks of students and ministers. Intelligent adhesion to a church is desirable. It is only by intelligent adherents that the machinery and the aggressive work of a church are likely to be sustained. Such adherence to a denomination is a healthy tie to religion itself. The men who can be counted upon as fit for important offices in the church, are usually such as know wherefore they are in the denomination, and have sympathy with its distinctive aims and its honored traditions. They whose connection is only casual and loose do not, commonly, add to a church's power; and it is not too much to say that information on subjects of this kind does not narrow, but widen the sympathies. It is commonly the ignorant and unreasoning who are afflicted with bigotry.

Nor is it entirely unworthy of notice that some connection is commonly found between reverent loyalty to the word as touching church-organization on the one hand, and deference to it in the inculcation of doctrine on the other. A mistaken view of the nature and history of the Church, is a fit preparation for the acceptance of error regarding the doctrines to be believed. Let the people hold that the apostles appointed three orders of ministers—bishops, priests, and deacons—who always and everywhere trace their commission to the apostles; that God is pleased to forgive sins in the Church by the priests of the Church; that the Greek, Roman, and Anglican Churches make up the Church Catholic; that all outside these are sectaries cut off from the Catholic Church: and it will be easy to believe in a sacrifice to God the Father in the Lord's Supper; in the cleansing efficacy of Baptism, in which the seed of spiritual life is sown in the soul; that there are other lesser sacramental rites, namely, Confirmation, Holy Order, Absolution, and Holy Matrimony; that the bishop takes the apostles' place; that "the sects" were founded not by Jesus Christ, but by erring men; that apostolical succession is like the meshes of a large net, but unbroken in the Greek, Anglican, and Roman Churches; and that the Protestant sects have abandoned the Catholic ministry and sacraments.[1]

But the Presbyterian and allied Churches of America do not mean to accept principles such as these ; and they do aim at the instruction of the people in the truth of God's word, as it justified the Reformers' separation from the Roman and Greek Churches. They know the history of apostacy, and of the Dark Ages. They know the conditions of populations given up to sacerdotalism. They understand how ignorance, and the reaction against priestly rule in the name of a "Catholic Church," which all too often takes shape in infidelity, have long contended for the minds of the nations of Europe. They have high historic authority for the belief that the Protestantism of Calvin and of the Puritans saved liberty to England, and gave it a home in America ; and they mean to preserve an independence of churches so corrupt that it was a duty to leave them, which shall be as real and as secure as the independence of the nation.

If the issue and the circulation of Dr. Killen's *Ancient Church*, with its fearless statement of historic fact and Scriptural principle, should, through God's blessing, in any degree promote these aims, the venerable author will rejoice with a joy which the present writer—one of his grateful and appreciative students—may be permitted to share. To many Christians in these United States, Dr. Killen's work will recall memories of early lessons, of parental convictions, and of church homes, in which self-reliance as to any creature, and absolute dependence upon the infinite power and grace of the Creator, were inculcated ; and, possibly, tracing the prosperity God has given them to these early teachings, they will renew their resolve to transmit the same heritage of faith, and fearless doing of the right for Christ's sake to their sons and daughters. So the real links are kept bright and strong by which we are bound to the true Church of the living God in all its members and branches ; and so parents and children, pastors and people, in the Church below are trained for the service and the happiness of the Church triumphant.

JOHN HALL,

Minister, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, N. Y.

FEB. 8, 1883.

[1] Every one of these statements is found in these words in a "Protestant" catechism circulated in New York.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

Upwards of twenty years ago the following work appeared contemporaneously in London and New York. These English and American editions soon found their way into the hands of readers; and a second edition, undertaken by a firm in Great Britain, has since been exhausted. The work has been for some time out of print; and, from various quarters, a desire has been expressed for its republication. The present edition has been carefully revised by the author, and twenty years of additional reading have enabled him to introduce into it considerable improvements. The great facts and principles which it originally enunciated remain unchanged, but several points are illustrated in a somewhat different manner, and, throughout, fresh confirmatory testimonies are subjoined.

College Park, Belfast, *August*, 1882.

PREFATORY NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

WHEN the First Edition of this Work appeared, the author was not aware that his views respecting the Ignatian Epistles had the support of Dr. Bentley. He has since been delighted to discover that he is, in this matter, sustained by the authority of the greatest of English critics.

In two instances the writer has ventured to dispute the accuracy of the *textus receptus* of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts ix. 31, p. 224, and Acts xv. 23, p. 75). A communication, received some time ago from Dr. Tischendorf, informs him that both the readings here adopted are those of the recently-discovered *Codex Sinaiticus*.

The author has been much encouraged by Reviewers of various denominations who have given this volume their approving testimony; and he begs to call attention to the fact that, though he has often left the path trodden by preceding historians, no attempt has hitherto been made to prove that he has misled his readers.

BELFAST, *April* 30, 1861.

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

PREFACE TO THE ORIGINAL EDITION.

THE appearance of another history of the early Church requires some explanation. As the progress of the Christian commonwealth for the first three hundred years has been recently described by British, German, and American writers of eminent ability, it may, perhaps, be thought that the subject is now exhausted. No competent judge will pronounce such an opinion. During the last quarter of a century, various questions relating to the Ancient Church, which are almost, if not altogether, ignored in existing histories, have been earnestly discussed; whilst several documents, lately discovered, have thrown fresh light on its transactions. There are, besides, points of view, disclosing unexplored fields for thought, from which the ecclesiastical landscape has never yet been contemplated. The following work is an attempt to exhibit some of its features as seen from a new position.

The importance of this portion of the history of the Church can scarcely be overestimated. Our attention is here directed to the life of Christ, to the labors of the apostles and evangelists, to the doctrines which they taught, to the form of worship which they sanctioned, to the organization of the community which they founded, and to the indomitable constancy with which its members suffered persecution. The practical bearing of the topics thus brought under review must be sufficiently obvious.

In the interval between the days of the apostles and the conversion of Constantine, the Christian commonwealth changed it aspect. The Bishop of Rome—a personage un-

known to the writers of the New Testament—meanwhile rose into prominence, and at length took precedence of all other churchmen. Rites and ceremonies, of which neither Paul nor Peter ever heard, crept silently into use, and then claimed the rank of Divine institutions. Officers for whom the primitive disciples could have found no place, and titles, which to them would have been altogether unintelligible, began to challenge attention, and to be named apostolic. It is the duty of the historian to endeavor to point out the origin, and to trace the progress of these innovations. A satisfactory account of them must go far to settle more than one of our present controversies. An attempt is here made to lay bare the causes which produced these changes, and to mark the stages of the ecclesiastical revolution. When treating of the rise and growth of the hierarchy, several remarkable facts and testimonies which have escaped the notice of preceding historians are particularly noticed.

Some may, perhaps, consider that, in a work such as this, undue prominence has been given to the discussion of the question of the Ignatian Epistles. Those who have carefully examined the subject will scarcely think so. If we accredit these documents, the history of the early Church is thrown into a state of hopeless confusion; and men, taught and honored by the apostles themselves, have inculcated the most dangerous errors. But if their claims vanish, when touched by the wand of truthful criticism, many clouds which have hitherto darkened the ecclesiastical atmosphere disappear; and the progress of corruption can be traced on scientific principles. The special attention of all interested in the Ignatian controversy is invited to the two chapters of this work in which the subject is investigated. Evidence is there produced to prove that these Ignatian letters, even as edited by the very learned and laborious Doctor Cureton, are utterly spurious; and that they should be swept away from among the genuine remains of early Church literature with the besom of scorn.

Throughout the work very decided views are expressed on a variety of topics; but it must surely be unnecessary to tender an apology for the free utterance of these sentiments; for,

when recording the progress of a revolution affecting the highest interests of man, the narrator can not be expected to divest himself of his cherished convictions; and very few will venture to maintain that a writer, who feels no personal interest in the great principles brought to light by the Gospel, is, on that account, more competent to describe the faith, the struggles, and the triumphs of the primitive Christians. I am not aware that mere prejudice has ever been permitted to influence my narrative, or that any statement has been made which does not rest upon solid evidence. Some of the views here presented may not have been suggested by any previous investigator, and they may be exceedingly damaging to certain popular theories; but they should not, therefore, be summarily condemned. Surely every honest effort to explain and reconcile the memorials of antiquity is entitled to a candid criticism. Nor, from those whose opinion is really worthy of respect, do I despair of a kindly reception for this volume. One of the most hopeful signs of the times is the increasing charity of evangelical Christians. There is a growing disposition to discountenance the spirit of religious partisanship, and to bow to the supremacy of TRUTH. I trust that those who are in quest of the old paths trodden by the apostles and the martyrs will find some light to guide them in the following pages.

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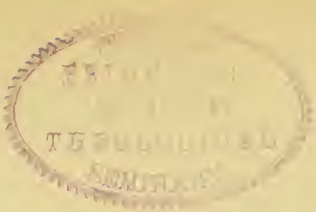

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PERIOD I.

FROM THE BIRTH OF CHRIST TO THE DEATH OF THE APOSTLE JOHN, A.D. 100.

SECTION I.

HISTORY OF THE PLANTING AND GROWTH OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

THE ROMAN EMPIRE AT THE TIME OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

UPWARDS of a quarter of a century before the Birth of Christ, the grandnephew of Julius Cæsar had become sole master of the Roman world. Never at any former period had so many human beings acknowledged the authority of a single potentate. Some of the most powerful monarchies at present in Europe extend over only a fraction of the territory which Augustus governed. The Atlantic on the west, the Euphrates on the east, the Danube and the Rhine on the north, and the deserts of Africa on the south, were the boundaries of his empire.

We do not adequately estimate the rank of Augustus among contemporary sovereigns, when we consider merely the superficial extent of the countries placed within the range of his jurisdiction. His subjects formed more than one-third of the entire population of the globe, and amounted to one hundred millions of souls.[1] His empire embraced within its immense circumference the best cultivated and the most civilized por-

[1] Mr. Merivale, in his "History of the Romans under the Empire" (vol. iv., p. 450), estimates the population in the time of Augustus at eighty-five millions, but in this reckoning he does not include Palestine, and perhaps some of his calculations are rather low. Greswell computes the population of Palestine at ten millions, and that of the whole empire at one hundred and twenty millions. ("Dissertations upon an Harmony of the Gospels," vol. iv., p. 11, 493.)

tions of the earth. The remains of its populous cities, its great fortresses, its extensive aqueducts, and its stately temples, still exist as memorials of its grandeur. The capital was connected with the most distant provinces by carefully constructed roads, along which the legions could march with ease and promptitude, either to quell an internal insurrection, or to encounter an invading enemy. And the military resources at the command of Augustus were abundantly sufficient to maintain obedience among the myriads whom he governed. After the victory of Actium he was at the head of upwards of forty veteran legions; and though some of these had been decimated by war, yet, when recruited, and furnished with their full complement of auxiliaries, they constituted a force of little less than half a million of soldiers.

The arts of peace now flourished under the sunshine of imperial patronage. Augustus could boast, toward the end of his reign, that he had converted Rome from a city of brick huts into a city of marble palaces. The wealth of the nobility was enormous; and, excited by the example of the Emperor and his friend Agrippa, they erected and decorated mansions in a style of regal magnificence. The taste cherished in the capital was soon widely diffused; and, in a short period, many new and gorgeous temples and cities appeared throughout the empire. Herod the Great expended vast sums on architectural improvements. The Temple of Jerusalem, rebuilt under his administration, was one of the wonders of the world.

The century terminating with the death of Augustus claims an undisputed pre-eminence in the history of Roman eloquence and literature. Cicero, the prince of Latin orators, now delivered those addresses which perpetuate his fame; Sallust and Livy produced works still regarded as models of historic composition; Horace, Virgil, and others, acquired celebrity as gifted and accomplished poets. Among the subjects fitted to exercise and expand the intellect, religion was not overlooked. In the great cities of the empire many were to be found who devoted themselves to metaphysical and ethical studies; and questions, bearing on the highest interests of man, were discussed in the schools of the philosophers.

The barbarous nations under the dominion of Augustus derived many advantages from their connection with the Roman empire. They had often reason to complain of the injustice and rapacity of provincial governors; but, on the whole, they had a larger share of social comfort than they could have enjoyed had they preserved their independence; for their domestic feuds were repressed by the presence of their powerful rulers, and the imperial armies were at hand to protect them against foreign aggression. By means of the constant intercourse kept up with all its dependencies, the skill and information of the metropolis of Italy were gradually imparted to the rude tribes under its sway; and thus the conquest of a savage country by the Romans was an important step toward its civilization. The union of so many nations in a great state was otherwise beneficial to society. A Roman citizen could travel without hindrance from Armenia to the British Channel; and as all the countries washed by the Mediterranean were subject to the empire, their inhabitants carried on a regular and prosperous traffic by availing themselves of the facilities of navigation.

The conquests of Rome modified the vernacular dialects of not a few of its subjugated provinces, and greatly promoted the diffusion of Latin. That language, which had gradually spread throughout Italy and the west of Europe, was at length understood by persons of rank and education in most parts of the empire. But in the time of Augustus, Greek was spoken still more extensively. Several centuries before, it had been planted in all the countries conquered by Alexander the Great; and it was now not only the most general, but also the most fashionable medium of communication. Even Rome swarmed with learned Greeks, who employed their native tongue when giving instruction in the higher branches of education. Greece itself, however, was considered the headquarters of intellectual cultivation; and the wealthier Romans were wont to send their sons to its celebrated seats of learning, to improve their acquaintance with philosophy and literature.

The Roman Empire in the time of Augustus presents to the eye of contemplation a most interesting spectacle, whether

we survey its territorial magnitude, its political power, or its intellectual activity. But when we look more minutely at its condition, we discover many other strongly marked and less inviting features. That stern patriotism, which imparted so much dignity to the old Roman character, had disappeared, and its place was occupied by ambition or covetousness. Venality reigned throughout every department of the public administration. Those domestic virtues, which are at once the ornaments and the strength of the community, were comparatively rare; and the prevalence of luxury and licentiousness proclaimed the unsafe state of the social fabric. There was a growing disposition to evade the responsibilities of marriage, and a large portion of the citizens of Rome deliberately preferred the system of concubinage to the state of wedlock. The civil wars which had created such confusion and involved such bloodshed, had passed away; but the peace which followed was rather the quietude of exhaustion than the repose of contentment.

The state of the Roman Empire at the time of the birth of Christ abundantly proves that there is no necessary connection between intellectual refinement and social regeneration. The cultivation of the arts and sciences in the reign of Augustus was beneficial to a few, by diverting them from the pursuit of vulgar pleasures, and opening up to them sources of more rational enjoyment; but during the brightest period in the history of Roman literature, vice in every form was fast gaining ground among almost all classes of the population. The Greeks, though occupying a higher position as to mental accomplishments, were still more dissolute than the Latins. Among them literature and sensuality appeared in revolting combination, for their courtesans were the only females who attended to the culture of the intellect.[1]

Nor is it strange that the Roman Empire at this period exhibited such a scene of moral pollution. There was nothing in either the philosophy or the religion of heathenism sufficient to counteract the influence of man's native depravity. In

[1] See the article Ἑταίραι in Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities."

many instances, the speculations of the pagan sages had a tendency rather to weaken than to sustain the authority of conscience. After unsettling the foundations of the ancient superstition, the mind was left in doubt and bewilderment; for the votaries of what was called wisdom entertained widely different views even of its elementary principles. The Epicureans, who formed a large section of the intellectual aristocracy, denied the doctrine of Providence, and pronounced pleasure to be the ultimate end of man; the Academics encouraged a spirit of disputatious scepticism; and the Stoics, who taught that the practice of, what they vaguely designated, virtue, involves its own reward, discarded the idea of a future retribution. Plato had still a goodly number of disciples; and though his doctrines, containing not a few elements of sublimity and beauty, exercised a better influence, they constituted a most unsatisfactory system of cold and barren mysticism. The ancient philosophers delivered many excellent moral precepts; but, as they wanted the light of revelation, their arguments in support of duty were essentially defective, and the lessons which they taught had often very little influence either on themselves or others.[1] Their own conduct seldom marked them out as greatly superior to those around them, so that neither their instructions nor their example contributed efficiently to elevate the character of their generation.

Though the philosophers fostered a spirit of inquiry, yet, as they made little progress in the discovery of truth, they were not qualified to act with the skill and energy of enlightened reformers; and, whatever may have been the amount of their convictions, they made no open and resolute attack on the popular mythology. A very superficial examination was, indeed, enough to shake the credit of the heathen worship. The reflecting subjects of the Roman Empire might have remarked the very awkward contrast between the multiplicity of their deities and the unity of their political government.

[1] "We despise," says an early Christian writer, "the supercilious looks of philosophers, whom we have known to be the corrupters of innocence, adulterers, and tyrants, and eloquent declaimers against vices of which they themselves are guilty."—*Octavius of Minucius Felix.*

It was the common belief that every nation had its own divine guardians, and that the religious rites of one country could be fully acknowledged without impugning the claims of those of another; but still a thinking pagan might have been staggered by the consideration that a human being had apparently more extensive authority than some of his celestial overseers, and that the jurisdiction of the Roman emperor was established over a more ample territory than that which was assigned to many of the immortal gods.

But the multitude of its divinities was by no means the most offensive feature of heathenism. The gods of antiquity, particularly those of Greece, were of infamous character. Whilst they were represented by their votaries as excelling in beauty and activity, strength and intelligence, they were also described as envious and gluttonous, base, lustful, and revengeful. Jupiter, the king of the gods, was deceitful and licentious; Juno, the queen of heaven, was cruel and tyrannical. What could be expected from those who honored such deities? Some of the wiser heathens, such as Plato,[1] condemned their mythology as immoral—for the conduct of one or other of the gods might have been quoted in vindication of every species of transgression; and had the Gentiles but followed the example of their own heavenly hierarchy, they could have found apologies for perpetrating the very worst forms of fraud, oppression, or profligacy.[2]

At the time of the birth of our Lord even the Jews had sunk into a state of the grossest degeneracy. They were divided into sects, two of which, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, are frequently mentioned in the New Testament. The Pharisees were the leading denomination, being by far the most numerous and powerful. By adding to the written law

[1] "De Republ.," ii.

[2] In the "Octavius of Minucius Felix" (c. 25), we meet with the following startling challenge: "Where are there more bargains for debauchery made, more assignations concerted, or more adultery devised than *by the priests* amidst the altars and shrines of the gods?" This, of course, refers to the state of things in the third century, but there is no reason to believe that it was now much better. Tertullian speaks in the same manner ("Apol.," c. 15). See also "Juvenal," sat. vi. 488, and ix. 23.

a mass of absurd or frivolous traditions, which, as they foolishly alleged, were handed down from Moses, they subverted the authority of the sacred record; and changed the religion of the patriarchs and prophets into a wearisome parade of superstitious observances. The Sadducees were comparatively few, but as a large proportion of them were persons of rank and wealth, they possessed considerable influence. It has been said that they admitted the divine authority only of the Pentateuch,[1] and though they may not have openly denied the claims of all the other books of the Old Testament, it is certain that they discarded the doctrine of the immortality of the soul,[2] and that they were disposed to self-indulgence and scepticism. Another still smaller Jewish sect, that of the Essenes, is not directly mentioned in the New Testament. The members of this community resided chiefly in the neighborhood of the Dead Sea; and as our Lord seldom visited that quarter of the country during the course of His public ministry, He rarely or never came in contact with these religionists. Some of them were married, but the greater number lived in celibacy, and spent much of their time in contemplation. They are said to have had a common purse, and their course of life closely resembled that of the monks of aftertimes.

Though the Jews, as a nation, were sunk in sensuality or superstition, some among them, such as Simeon and Anna, noticed in the Gospel of Luke,[3] were taught of God, and exhibited a spirit of vital piety. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul," and as the books of the Old Testament were committed to the keeping of the posterity of Abraham, "hidden ones" here and there discovered the way to heaven by the perusal of these "lively oracles." The Jews were faithful conservators of the inspired volume, as Christ uniformly takes for granted the accuracy of their "Scriptures."[4] They did not admit into their canon the writings

[1] "Origen. Contra Celsum," lib. i., c. 49.

[2] Matt. xxii. 23.

[3] Luke ii. 25, 36.

[4] See Matt. v. 18; John v. 39, and x. 35.

known as the *Apocrypha*.[1] Nearly three hundred years before the appearance of our Lord, the Old Testament had been translated into the Greek language, and thus, at this period, the educated portion of the population of the Roman Empire had all an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the religion of the chosen people. The Jews were scattered over the earth, and as they erected synagogues in the cities where they settled, the Gentile world had ample means of information in reference to their faith and worship.

Whilst the dispersion of the Jews disseminated a knowledge of their religion, it suggested the approaching dissolution of the Mosaic economy—as it was apparent that their present circumstances absolutely required another ritual. It was not to be expected that individuals dwelling in distant countries could meet three times in the year at Jerusalem to celebrate the great festivals. The Israelites themselves had a presentiment of coming changes, and anxiously awaited the appearance of a Messiah. They were actuated by an extraordinary zeal for proselytism,[2] and though their scrupulous adherence to a stern code of ceremonies often exposed them to much obloquy, they succeeded, notwithstanding, in making many converts in most of the places where they resided.[3] A prominent article of their creed was adopted in a quarter where

[1] See Josephus against Apion, i., § 8. Origen says that the Hebrews had twenty-two sacred books corresponding to the number of letters in their alphabet. (Opera, ii. 528.) Jerome states that they reckoned in the following manner: they considered the Twelve Minor Prophets only one book; First and Second Samuel, one book; First and Second Kings, one book; First and Second Chronicles, one book; Ezra and Nehemiah, one book; Jeremiah and Lamentations, one book; the Pentateuch, five books; Judges and Ruth, one book; thus with the other ten books of Joshua, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, making up twenty-two. The most learned Roman Catholic writers admit that what are called the apocryphal books were never acknowledged by the Jewish Church. See, for example, Dupin's "History of Ecclesiastical Writers," Preliminary Dissertation, section ii. See also Father Simon's "Critical History of the Old Testament," book i., chap. viii.

[2] Matt. xxiii. 15.

[3] Many proofs of this occur in the Acts. See Acts x. 2, xiii. 43, xvi. 14, xvii. 4.

their theology otherwise found no favor, for the Unity of the Great First Cause was distinctly acknowledged in the schools of the philosophers.[1]

From the preceding statements we see the peculiar significance of the announcement that God sent forth His Son into the world "*when the fulness of the time was come.*"[2] Various predictions[3] pointed out this age as the period of the Messiah's Advent; and Gentiles, as well as Jews, had by some means caught up the expectation that an extraordinary personage was about to present himself on the theatre of human existence.[4] Providence had obviously prepared the way for the labors of a religious reformer. The civil wars which had convulsed the State were almost forgotten, and though the hostile movements of the Germans and other barbarous tribes on the confines of the empire occasionally created uneasiness or alarm, the public mind was generally unoccupied by any great topic of absorbing interest. In the populous cities the multitude languished for excitement; and sought to dissipate time in the forum, the circus, or the amphitheatre. At such a crisis the heralds of the most gracious message that ever greeted the ears of men might hope for a patient hearing. Even the consolidation of so many nations under one government tended to "the furtherance of the Gospel"; for the gigantic roads, which radiated from Rome to the distant regions of the east and of the west, facilitated intercourse; and the messengers of the Prince of Peace travelled from country to country without suspicion and without passports. Well might the Son of God be called "The desire of all nations."[5] Though the wisest of the pagan sages could not have described the renovation which the human family required, and though, when the Redeemer actually appeared, He was despised and

[1] See Cudworth's "Intellectual System," i. 318, etc. Edition, London, 1845. Warburton has adduced evidence to prove that this doctrine was imparted to the initiated in the heathen mysteries. "Divine Legation of Moses," i. 224. Edit., London, 1837.

[2] Gal. iv. 4.

[3] Gen. xlix. 10; Dan. ix. 25; Haggai ii. 6, 7.

[4] Virgil, Ec. iv. Suetonius, Octavius, 94. Tacitus, Histor. v. 13.

[5] Haggai ii. 7.

rejected of men, there was, withal, a widespread conviction that a Saviour was required, and there was a longing for deliverance from the evils which oppressed society. The ancient superstitions were rapidly losing their hold on the affection and confidence of the people, and whilst the light of philosophy was sufficient to discover the absurdities of the prevailing polytheism, it failed to reveal any more excellent way of purity and comfort. The ordinances of Judaism, "waxing old" and "ready to vanish away," were types still unfulfilled; and though they pointed out the path to glory, they required an interpreter to expound their import. This Great Teacher now appeared. He was born in very humble circumstances, and yet He was the heir of an empire beyond comparison more illustrious than that of the Cæsars. "There was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."[1]

[1] Dan. vii. 14.

CHAPTER II.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

NEARLY three years before the commencement of our era,[1] Jesus Christ was born. The Holy Child was introduced into the world under circumstances extremely humiliating. A decree had gone forth from Cæsar Augustus that all the Roman Empire should be taxed, and the Jews, as a conquered people, were obliged to submit to an arrangement which proclaimed their national degradation. The reputed parents of Jesus resided at Nazareth, a town of Galilee; but, as they were "of the house and lineage of David," they were obliged to repair to Bethlehem, a village about six miles south of Jerusalem, to be entered in their proper place in the imperial registry. "And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that Mary should be delivered, and she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."[2]

This child of poverty and of a despised race, born in the stable of the lodging-house of an insignificant town belonging to a conquered province, did not enter upon life surrounded by associations which betokened a career of earthly prosperity. But intimations were not wanting that the son of Mary was regarded with the deepest interest by the inhabitants of heaven. An angel had announced the conception of the individual who was the herald of His ministry;[3] and

[1] See Supplementary Note at the end of this chapter on the year of Christ's Birth.

[2] Luke ii. 6, 7.

[3] Luke i. 11, 19.

another angel had given notice of the incarnation of this Great Deliverer.[1] When He was born, the angel of the Lord communicated the tidings to shepherds in the plains of Bethlehem; "and suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."[2] Inanimate nature called attention to the advent of the illustrious babe, for a wonderful star made known to wise men from the east the incarnation of the King of Israel; and when they came to Jerusalem "the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was."[3] The history of these eastern sages can not now be explored, and we know not on what grounds they regarded the star as the sign of the Messiah; but they rightly interpreted the appearance, and the narrative warrants us to infer that they acted under the guidance of divine illumination. As they were "warned of God in a dream"[4] to return to their own country another way, it may be that they were originally directed by some similar communication to undertake the journey. If, as is probable, they did not belong to the stock of Abraham, their visit to the babe at Bethlehem was the harbinger of the union of Jews and Gentiles under the new economy. The presence of these Orientals in Jerusalem attracted the notice of the watchful and jealous tyrant who then occupied the throne of Judea. Their story filled him with alarm, and his subjects anticipated some tremendous outbreak of his suspicious and savage temper. "When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him."[5] His rage soon vented itself in a terrible explosion. Having ascertained from the chief priests and scribes of the

[1] Luke i. 26, 31. [2] Luke ii. 13, 14. [3] Matt. ii. 9. [4] Matt. ii. 12.

[5] Matt. ii. 3. The evangelist does not positively assert that the wise men met Herod *at Jerusalem*. On their arrival in the holy city he was probably at Jericho—distant about a day's journey—for Josephus states that he died there. ("Antiq." xvii. 6, § 5, and 8, §1.) We may infer, therefore, that he "heard" of the strangers, on his sick-bed, and "privily called" them to Jericho. The chief priests and scribes were, perhaps, summoned to attend him at the same place.

people where Christ was to be born, he "sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under."[1]

Joseph and Mary, in accordance with a message from heaven, had meanwhile fled toward the border of Egypt, and thus the holy infant escaped this carnage. The wise men, on the occasion of their visit, had "opened their treasures," and had "presented unto Him gifts, *gold*, and frankincense, and myrrh,"[2] so that the poor travellers had providentially obtained means for defraying the expenses of their journey. The slaughter of the babes of Bethlehem was one of the last acts of the bloody reign of Herod; and on his demise, the exiles were divinely instructed to return, and the child was presented in the temple. This ceremony evoked new testimonies to His high mission. On His appearance in His Father's house, the aged Simeon, moved by the Spirit from on high, embraced Him as the promised Shiloh; and Anna, the prophetess, likewise gave thanks to God, and "spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."[3] Thus, whilst the Old Testament predictions pointed to Jesus as the Christ, living

[1] Matt. ii. 16. The estimates formed at a subsequent period of the number of infants in the village of Bethlehem and its precincts betray a strange ignorance of statistics. "The Greek Church canonized the 14,000 innocents," observes the Dean of St. Paul's, "and another notion, founded on a misrepresentation of Revelation (xiv. 3), swelled the number to 144,000. The former, at least, was the common belief of our church, though *even in our liturgy the latter has in some degree been sanctioned* by retaining the chapter of Revelation as the epistle for the day. Even later, Jeremy Taylor, in his 'Life of Christ,' admits the 14,000 without scruple, or rather without thought."—*Milman's History of Christianity*, i. p. 113, note.

[2] Matt. ii. 11.

[3] Luke ii. 38. It is a curious fact that in the year 751 of the city of Rome, the year of the Birth of Christ according to the chronology adopted in this volume, the passover was not celebrated as usual in Judea. The disturbances which occurred on the death of Herod had become so serious on the arrival of the pascal day, that Archelaus was obliged to disperse the people by force of arms in the very midst of the sacrifices. So soon did Christ begin to cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease. See Greswell's "Dissertations," i. pp. 393, 394, note.

prophets appeared to interpret these sacred oracles, and to bear witness to the claims of the new-born Saviour.

Though the Son of Mary was beyond all comparison the most extraordinary personage that ever appeared on earth, it is remarkable that the sacred writers enter into scarcely any details respecting the history of His infancy, His youth, or His early manhood. They tell us that "the child grew and waxed strong in spirit,"[1] and that He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man";[2] but they do not minutely trace the progress of His mental development, neither do they gratify any feeling of mere curiosity by giving us His infantile biography. In what is omitted by the penmen of the New Testament, as well as in what is written, we must acknowledge the guidance of inspiration; and though we would have perused with avidity a description of the pursuits of Jesus when a child, such a record has not been deemed necessary for the illustration of the work of redemption. He spent about thirty years on earth almost unnoticed and unknown; and He was meanwhile trained to the occupation of a carpenter.[3] The obscurity of His early career was one part of His humiliation. But the circumstances in which He was placed enabled Him to exhibit more clearly the divinity of His origin. He did not receive a liberal education, so that when He came forward as a public teacher "the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, *having never learned?*"[4] When He was only twelve years old, He was "found in the temple sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions; and all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."[5] As He grew up, He was distinguished by His diligent attendance in the house of God; and He was in the habit of officiating at public worship by assisting in the reading of the law and the prophets; for, we are told that, shortly after the commencement of His ministry, "He came to Nazarath, where he had been brought up, and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and *stood up for to read.*"[6]

[1] Luke ii. 40. [2] Luke ii. 52. [3] Mark vi. 3.
[4] John vii. 15. [5] Luke ii. 46, 47. [6] Luke iv. 16.

When He was thirty years of age, and immediately before His public appearance as a prophet, our Lord was baptized of John in Jordan.[1] The Baptist did not preach longer than six months;[2] but during his imprisonment of considerably upwards of a year, he still contributed to prepare the way of Christ; for, in the fortress of Machaerus in which he was incarcerated,[3] he was not kept in utter ignorance of passing occurrences; and when permitted to hold intercourse with his friends, he doubtless directed their attention to the proceedings of the Great Prophet. The claims of John, as a teacher sent from God, were extensively acknowledged, and, therefore, his recognition of our Lord as the promised Messiah, must have impressed the minds of the Israelites. The miracles of our Saviour corroborated the testimony of His forerunner, and created a deep sensation. He healed "all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease."[4] It was, consequently, not strange that "his fame went throughout all Syria," and that "there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan."[5]

Even when the Most High reveals Himself there is something mysterious in the manifestation, so that as we acknowledge the tokens of His presence, we may well exclaim, "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour."[6] When He displayed His glory in the temple of old, He filled it with thick darkness;[7] when He delivered the sure word of prophecy, He employed strange and misty

[1] Luke iii. 21–23. "It became Him, being in the likeness of sinful flesh, to go through these appointed rites and purifications which belonged to that flesh. There is no more strangeness in His having been baptized by John, than in His keeping the Passover. The one rite, as the other, belonged to sinners, and among the transgressors He was numbered."—ALFORD, *Greek Testament*, note on Matt. iii. 13–17.

[2] See Greswell's "Dissertations upon an Harmony of the Gospels," vol. i. pp. 362, 363. John probably commenced his ministry about the Feast of Tabernacles, A.D. 27.

[3] See Josephus, "Antiq." xviii. 5, § 2.

[4] Matt. iv. 23.

[5] Matt. iv. 24, 25.

[6] Isaiah xlv. 15.

[7] 1 Kings viii. 10–12.

language; when He announced the Gospel itself, He uttered some things hard to be understood. It might have been said of the Son of God, when He appeared on earth, that His "footsteps were not known." In early life He does not seem to have arrested the attention of His own townsmen; and when He came forward to assert His claims as the Messiah, He did not overawe or dazzle His countrymen by any sustained demonstration of tremendous power or of overwhelming splendor. To-day the multitude beheld His miracles with wonder, but to-morrow they could not tell where to meet with Him;[1] ever and anon He appeared and disappeared; and occasionally His own disciples found it difficult to discover the place of His retirement. When He arrived in a district, thousands often hastily gathered round Him;[2] but He never encouraged the attendance of vast assemblages by giving general notice that, in a specified place and on an appointed day, He would deliver a public address, or perform a new and unprecedented miracle. We here see the wisdom of Him who "doeth all things well." Whilst the secrecy with which He conducted His movements baffled any premature attempts on the part of His enemies to effect His capture or condemnation, it also checked that intense popular excitement which a ministry so extraordinary awakened.

Four inspired writers have given separate accounts of the life of Christ—all repeat many of His wonderful sayings—all dwell with marked minuteness on the circumstances of His death—and all attest the fact of His resurrection. Each mentions some things which the others have omitted; and each apparently observes the order of time in the details of his narrative. But when we combine and arrange their various statements, so as to form the whole into one regular and comprehensive testimony, we discover that there are not a few periods of His life still left destitute of incidents; and that there is no reference whatever to topics which we should expect to find particularly noticed in the biography of so

[1] John v. 13, vi. 15, viii. 59, xii. 36; Mark i. 45, vii. 24.

[2] Mark ii. 1, 2; Matt. xiv. 13, 14, 21, xv. 32, 38, 39.

great a personage. After His appearance as a public teacher, He not only made sudden transitions from place to place, but otherwise often courted the shade; and, instead of unfolding the circumstances of His private history, the evangelists dwell chiefly on His Discourses and His Miracles. During His ministry, Capernaum was His headquarters;[1] but we can not tell with whom He lodged; nor whether the twelve sojourned under the same roof with Him; nor how much time He spent in it at any particular period. We can not point out the precise route which He pursued on any occasion when itinerating throughout Galilee or Judea; neither are we sure that He always journeyed on foot, or that He adhered to a uniform mode of travelling. It is most singular that the inspired writers never throw out a hint on which an artist could seize as the groundwork of a painting of Jesus. As if to teach us more emphatically that we are to beware of a sensuous superstition, and that we should direct our thoughts to the spiritual features of His character, the New Testament never mentions either the color of His hair, or the height of His stature, or the cast of His countenance. How wonderful that even "the beloved disciple," who was permitted to lean on the bosom of the Son of man, and who had seen Him in the most trying circumstances of His earthly history, never speaks of the tones of His voice, or of the expression of His eye, or of any striking peculiarity pertaining to His personal appearance! The silence of all the evangelists respecting matters of which at least some of them must have retained a very vivid remembrance, and of which ordinary biographers would not have failed to preserve a record, supplies an indirect and yet a most powerful proof of the Divine origin of the Gospels.

[1] Matt. iv. 13. Hence it is said to have been "exalted unto heaven" in the way of privilege. Matt. xi. 23; Luke x. 15. It was the residence as well of Peter and Andrew (Matt. xvii. 24), as of James, John (Mark i. 21, 29), and Matthew (Mark ii. 1, 14, 15), and there also dwelt the nobleman whose son was healed by our Lord (John iv. 46). It was on the borders of the sea of Galilee, so that by crossing the water He could at once reach the territory of another potentate, and withdraw Himself from the multitudes drawn together by the fame of His miracles. See Milman's "History of Christianity," i. 188.

But whilst the sacred writers enter so sparingly into personal details, they leave no doubt as to the perfect integrity which marked every part of our Lord's proceedings. He was born in a degenerate age, and brought up in a city of Galilee so infamous that no good thing was expected to proceed from it;[1] and yet, like a ray of purest light shining into some den of uncleanness, He contracted no defilement from the scenes of pollution which He was obliged to witness. Even in boyhood, He uniformly acted with supreme discretion; and though His enemies from time to time gave vent to their malignity in various accusations, they never sought to cast so much as a solitary stain upon His youthful reputation. The most malicious of the Jews failed to fasten on Him in after-life any charge of immorality. Among those constantly admitted to His familiar intercourse, a traitor was found; and had Judas been able to detect anything in His private deportment inconsistent with His public profession, he would doubtless have proclaimed it as an apology for his perfidy; but the keen eye of that close observer could not discover a single blemish in the character of his Master; and when, prompted by covetousness, he betrayed Him to the chief priests, the thought of having been accessory to the death of one so kind and so holy, continued to torment him, until it drove him to despair and to self-destruction.

The doctrine inculcated by our Lord commended itself by the light of its own evidence. It was nothing more than a lucid and comprehensive exposition of the theology of the Old Testament; and yet it presented such a new view of the faith of patriarchs and prophets, that it had all the freshness and interest of an original revelation. It discovered a most intimate acquaintance with the mental constitution of man—it appealed with mighty power to conscience—and it was felt to be exactly adapted to the moral state and spiritual wants of the human family. The disciples of Jesus did not require to be told that He had "the key of knowledge," for they were delighted and edified as "He opened" to them the

[1] John i. 46.

Scriptures.[1] He taught the multitude "as one having authority";[2] and they were "astonished at His doctrine." The discourses of the scribes, their most learned instructors, were meagre and vapid—they were not calculated to enlarge the mind or to move the affections—they consisted frequently of doubtful disputations relating to the ceremonials of their worship—and the very air with which they were delivered betrayed the insignificance of the topics of discussion. But Jesus spake with a dignity which commanded respect, and with the seriousness of a great Teacher delivering to perishing sinners the lessons of eternal truth.

There was something singularly beautiful and attractive, as well as majestic and impressive, in the teaching of our Lord. The Sermon on the Mount is a most pleasing specimen of His method of conveying instruction. Whilst He gives utterance to sentiments of exalted wisdom, He employs language so simple, and imagery so chaste and natural, that even a child is interested and delighted. He did not speak in parables for a considerable time after He entered on His ministry.[3] By these symbolical discourses He blinded the eyes of His enemies, and furnished materials for profitable meditation to His genuine disciples. The parables, like the light of prophecy, are, to this very day, a beacon to the Church, and a stumbling-block to unbelievers.

The claim of Jesus to be the Christ was decisively established by the Divine power which He manifested. It had been foretold that certain extraordinary recoveries from disease and infirmity should be witnessed in the days of the Messiah; and these predictions were literally fulfilled. The eyes of the blind were opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; the lame man leaped as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sang.[4] Not a few of the cures of our Saviour were

[1] Luke xxiv. 32. [2] Matt. vii. 29.

[3] According to Mr. Greswell, our Lord adopted this method of teaching about eighteen months after the commencement of His ministry, and the Parable of the Sower was the first delivered. "Exposition of the Parable,' vol. i., p. 2.

[4] Isa. xxxv. 5, 6.

wrought on individuals to whom He was personally unknown ;[1] and many of His works of wonder were performed in the presence of friends and foes.[2] Whilst His miracles exceeded in number all those recorded in the Old Testament, they were still more remarkable for their variety and excellence. By His touch, or His word, He healed the most inveterate maladies ; He fed the multitude by thousands out of a store of provisions which a little boy could carry ;[3] He walked upon the waves of the sea, when it was agitated by a tempest ;[4] He made the storm a calm, so that when the wind ceased to blow, the surface of the deep reposed, at the same moment, in glassy smoothness ;[5] He cast out devils ; and He restored life to the dead. Well might the Pharisees be perplexed by the inquiry, "How can a man that is a sinner do *such* miracles?"[6] It is quite possible that false prophets, by the help of Satan, may accomplish feats fitted to excite astonishment ; and yet, in such cases, the agents of the Wicked One will exhibit some symptoms of his spirit and character. But nothing diabolical, or of an evil tendency, appeared in the miracles of our Lord. With the two exceptions of the cursing of the barren fig-tree,[7] and the permitting the devils to enter into the swine,[8] all His displays of power were indicative of His goodness and His mercy. No other than a true prophet could have so often controlled the course of nature, in the production of results of such utility, benignity, and grandeur.

The miracles of Christ illustrated, as well as confirmed, His doctrines. When, for instance, He converted the water into wine at the marriage in Cana of Galilee,[9] He taught, not only that He approved of wedlock, but also that, within proper limits, we should exercise a generous hospitality. In some cases He required faith in those whom He vouchsafed to

[1] See John v. 13, ix. 1, 6, 25, 36.
[2] Mark ii. 6, 7, 10, 11, iii. 5, 22.
[3] John vi. 9.
[4] Matt. xiv. 24, 25.
[5] Mark iv. 39 ; Matt. viii. 26, 27.
[6] John ix. 16.
[7] Matt. xxi. 19. Neander has shown that this was a typical action pointing to the rejection of the Jews. See his "Life of Jesus Christ" by M'Clintock and Blumenthal, p. 357.
[8] Mark v. 13.
[9] John ii. 9.

cure,[1] thus distinctly suggesting the way of a sinner's salvation. Many of His miracles were obviously of a typical character. When He acted as the physician of the body, He indirectly gave evidence of His efficiency as the physician of the soul; when He restored sight to the blind, He indicated that He can turn men from darkness to light; when He raised the dead, He virtually demonstrated His ability to quicken the dead in trespasses and sins. Those who witnessed these exhibitions of His power were prepared to listen with the deepest interest to His words when He declared, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have *the light of life*." [2]

Though our Lord's conduct, as a public teacher, fully sustained His claims as the Messiah, it was a complete enigma to all classes of politicians. He did not seek to obtain power by courting the favor of the great, neither did He attempt to gain popularity by flattering the prejudices of the multitude. He wounded the national pride by hinting at the destruction of the temple; He gave much offence by holding intercourse with the odious publicans; and with many, He forfeited all credit, as a patriot, by refusing to affirm the unlawfulness of paying tribute to the Roman emperor. The greatest human characters have been occasionally swayed by personal predilections or antipathies, but, in the life of Christ, we can discover no memorial of infirmity. Like a sage among children, He did not permit Himself to be influenced by the petty partialities, whims, or superstitions of His countrymen. He inculcated a theological system for which He could not expect the support of any of the existing classes of religionists. He differed from the Essenes, as He did not adopt their ascetic habits; He displeased the Sadducees, by asserting the doctrine of the resurrection; He provoked the Pharisees, by declaring that they worshipped God in vain, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men; and He incurred the hostility of the whole tribe of Jewish zealots, by maintaining His right to supersede the arrangements of the Mosaic economy.

[1] Matt. ix. 28, 29; Mark vi. 5, ix. 23, 24.

[2] John viii. 12.

By pursuing this independent course He vindicated His title to the character of a Divine lawgiver, but at the same time He forfeited a vast amount of sympathy and aid on which He might otherwise have calculated.

There has been considerable diversity of opinion regarding the length of our Saviour's ministry.[1] We could approximate very closely to a correct estimate could we tell the number of passovers from its commencement to its close, but this point can not be determined with absolute certainty. Four, apparently, are mentioned[2] by the evangelist John; and if, as is probable, they amounted to no more, our Lord's career, as a public teacher, was of about three years' duration.[3] The greater part of this period was spent in Galilee; and the sacred writers intimate that He made several circuits, as a missionary, among the cities and villages of that populous district.[4] Matthew, Mark, and Luke dwell chiefly upon this portion of His history. Toward the termination of His course, Judea was the principal scene of His ministrations. Jerusalem was the centre of Jewish power and prejudice, and He had hitherto chiefly labored in remote districts of the land, where He was comparatively free from the annoyance of the Scribes and Pharisees; but, as His end approached, He acted with greater publicity, and often taught openly in the very courts of the temple. John supplements the narratives of the other evangelists by recording our Lord's proceedings in Judea.

A few members of the Sanhedrim, such as Nicodemus,[5]

[1] Several of the early fathers imagined that it continued only a year. Some of them, such as Clemens Alexandrinus, drew this conclusion from Isaiah lxi. 1, "To preach *the acceptable year* of the Lord." See Kaye's "Clement of Alexandria," p. 347.

[2] John ii. 13, v. 1, vi. 4, xii. 1. Eusebius argues from the number of high-priests that our Lord's ministry did not embrace four entire years. "Ecc. Hist." i. c. x.

[3] He lived, therefore, about thirty-three years. According to Malte Brun ("Universal Geography," book xxii.), "the *mean duration* of human life is between thirty and forty years," and, in the same chapter, he computes it at thirty-three years. It would thus appear that, at the time of His death, our Lord was, in point of age, a fitting representative of the species.

[4] Luke iv. 44, viii. 1; Matt. ix. 35.

[5] John iii. 1, 2.

believed Jesus to be "a teacher come from God," but by far the majority regarded Him with extreme aversion. They could not imagine that the son of a carpenter was to be the Saviour of their country, for they expected the Messiah to appear surrounded with all the splendor of secular magnificence. They were hypocritical and selfish; they had been repeatedly rebuked by Christ for their impiety; and, as they marked His increasing favor with the multitude, their envy and indignation beame ungovernable. They accordingly seized Him at the time of the Passover, and, on the charge that He said He was the Son of God, He was condemned as a blasphemer.[1] He suffered crucifixion—an ignominious form of capital punishment from which the laws of the empire exempted every Roman citizen—and, to add to His disgrace, He was put to death between two thieves.[2] But even Pontius Pilate, then Procurator of Judea, and who, in that capacity, endorsed the sentence, was constrained to acknowledge that He was a "just person" in whom He could find "no fault."[3] Pilate was a truckling time-server, and he acquiesced in the decision, simply because he was afraid to exasperate the Jews by rescuing from their grasp an innocent man whom they persecuted with unrelenting hatred.[4]

The death of Christ, of which all the evangelists treat so particularly, is the most awful and the most momentous event in the history of the world. He, no doubt, fell a victim to the malice of the rulers of the Jews; but He was delivered into their hands "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God";[5] and, if we discard the idea that He was offered up as a vicarious sacrifice, it is impossible to give anything like a satisfactory account of what occurred in Gethsemane and at Calvary. The amount of physical suffering He sustained from man did not exceed that endured by either of the malefactors with whom He was associated; and such was His magnanimity and fortitude, that, had He been an ordinary martyr, the prospect of crucifixion would not have been suffi-

[1] Matt. xxvi. 63-66. [2] Matt. xxvii. 38.
[3] Matt. xxvii. 24; John xviii. 38. [4] Mark xv. 10, 15. [5] Acts ii. 23.

cient to make Him "exceeding sorrowful" and "sore amazed."[1] His holy soul was wrung with no common agony when "His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground,"[2] and when He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"[3] In that hour of "the power of darkness" He was "smitten of God and afflicted," and there was never sorrow like unto His sorrow, for upon Him were laid "the iniquities of us all."

The incidents which accompanied the death of Jesus were even more impressive than those which signalized His birth. When He was in the garden of Gethsemane, there appeared unto Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him.[4] During the three concluding hours of His intense anguish on the cross, there was darkness over all the land,[5] as if nature mourned along with the illustrious sufferer. When He bowed His head on Calvary and gave up the ghost, the event was marked by notifications such as never announced the demise of any of this world's great potentates, for "the veil of the temple was rent in twain," and the rocks were cleft asunder, and the graves were opened, and the earth trembled.[6] "The centurion and they that were with him" in attendance at the execution were Gentiles; and, though they had heard that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah of the Jews, they very imperfectly understood what this implied; but they were forthwith overwhelmed with the conviction that He, whose death they had just witnessed, had given a true account of His mission and His dignity; for, when they "saw the earthquake and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly, this was *the Son of God*."[7]

The body of our Lord was committed to the grave on the evening of Friday, and, early on the morning of the following Sunday, He issued from the tomb. An ordinary individual has no control over the duration of his existence, but Jesus demonstrated that He had power to lay down His life, and

[1] Matt. xxvi. 38; Mark xiv. 33. [2] Luke xxii. 44. [3] Matt. xxvii. 46.
[4] Luke xxii. 43. [5] Luke xxiii. 44; Mark xv. 33.
[6] Matt. xxvii. 51, 52. [7] Matt. xxvii. 54.

that He had power to take it again.[1] Had He been a deceiver, His delusions would have terminated with His death so that His resurrection was His crowning miracle, or rather, the affixing of the broad seal of Heaven to the truth of His mission as the Messiah. It was, besides, the fulfilment of an ancient prophecy;[2] a proof of His foreknowledge;[3] and a pledge of the resurrection of His disciples.[4] Hence, in the New Testament,[5] it is so often mentioned with marked emphasis.

There is no fact connected with the life of Christ better attested than His resurrection. He was put to death by His enemies, and His body was not removed from the cross until they were fully satisfied that the vital spark had fled.[6] His tomb was scooped out of a solid rock,[7] the stone which blocked up the entrance was sealed with all care, and a military guard kept constant watch to prevent its violation;[8] but in due time an earthquake shook the cemetery—"The angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it; . . . . and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men."[9] Our Lord meanwhile came forth from the grave, and the sentinels, in consternation, hastened to the chief priests and communicated the astounding intelligence.[10] But these infatuated men, instead of yielding to the force of this overwhelming evidence, endeavored to conceal their infamy by the base arts of bribery and falsehood. "They gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept. . . . . So they took the money and did as they were taught."[11]

Jesus, as the first-born of Mary, was presented in the temple forty days after His birth; and, as "the first-begotten of the

[1] John x. 18. [2] Ps. xvi. 10; Acts ii. 31.
[3] John ii. 19; Mark viii. 31; Luke xviii. 33.
[4] John xiv. 19; 1 Thess. iv. 14.
[5] Rom. i. 4; 1 Cor. xv. 14, 17; 1 Pet. i. 3; Rev. i. 18.
[6] John xix. 33, 34. [7] Matt. xxvii. 60. [8] Matt. xxvii. 66.
[9] Matt. xxviii. 2, 4. [10] Matt. xxviii. 11. [11] Matt. xxviii. 12, 13, 15.

dead,"[1] He presented Himself before His Father in the temple above forty days after He had opened the womb of the grave. During the interval He appeared only to His own followers.[2] Those who had so long and so wilfully rejected the testimony of His teaching and His miracles, had certainly no reason to expect any additional proofs of His Divine mission. But the Lord manifests Himself to His Church, "and not unto the world,"[3] and to such as fear His name He is continually supplying new and interesting illustrations of His presence, His power, His wisdom, and His mercy. Whilst He is a pillar of darkness to His foes, He is a pillar of light to His people. Though Jesus was now invisible to the Scribes and Pharisees, He admitted His disciples to high and holy fellowship. Their hearts burned within them as He spake to them "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,"[4] and as "he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."[5] Now, He doubtless pointed out to them how He was symbolized in the types, exhibited in the promises, and described in the prophecies. He explained to them more fully the arrangements of His Church, and He commanded His apostles to go and "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."[6] Having assured the twelve of His presence with His true servants even unto the end of the world, and having led them out as far as Bethany, a village a few furlongs from Jerusalem, "he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven."[7]

Thus closed the earthly career of Him who is both the Son of man and the Son of God. Though He was sorely tried by the privations of poverty, though He was exposed to the most brutal and degrading insults, and though at last He was forsaken by His friends and consigned to a death of lingering agony, He never performed a single act or uttered a

[1] Rev. i. 5.
[2] Acts x. 40, 41.
[3] John xiv. 22.
[4] Acts i. 3.
[5] Luke xxiv. 27.
[6] Matt. xxviii. 19.
[7] Luke xxiv. 50, 51.

single word unworthy of His exalted and blessed mission. The narratives of the evangelists supply clear internal evidence that, when they described the history of Jesus, they copied from a living original; for otherwise no four individuals, certainly no four Jews, could have each furnished such a portrait of so great and so singular a personage. Combining the highest respect for the institutions of Moses with a spirit eminently catholic, He was at once a devout Israelite and a large-hearted citizen of the world. Rising far superior to the prejudices of His countrymen, He visited Samaria, and conversed freely with its population; and, when declaring that He was sent specially to the seed of Abraham, He was ready to extend His sympathy to their bitterest enemies. Though He took on Him the form of a servant, there was nothing mean or servile in His behavior: for, when He humbled Himself, there was ever about Him an air of condescending majesty. Whether He administers comfort to the mourner, or walks upon the waves of the sea, or replies to the cavils of the Pharisees, He is still the same calm, holy, and gracious Saviour. When His passion was immediately in view, He was as kind and as considerate as ever, for, on the very night in which He was betrayed, He was employed in the institution of an ordinance which was to serve as a sign and a seal of His grace throughout all generations. His character is as sublime as it is original. It has no parallel in the history of the human family. The impostor is cunning, the demagogue is turbulent, and the fanatic is absurd; but the conduct of Jesus Christ is uniformly gentle and serene, candid, courteous, and consistent. Well, indeed, may His name be called Wonderful. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."[1]

[1] John i. 10–12.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE TO CHAPTER II.

THE YEAR OF CHRIST'S BIRTH.

THE Christian era commences on the 1st of January of the year 754 of the city of Rome. That our Lord was born about the time stated in the text may appear from the following considerations:

The visit of the wise men to Bethlehem must have taken place a very few days after the birth of Jesus, and before His presentation in the temple. Bethlehem was not the stated residence of Joseph and Mary, either before or after the birth of the child (Luke i. 26, ii. 4, 39; Matt. ii. 2). They were obliged to repair to the place on account of the taxing, and immediately after the presentation in the temple, they returned to Nazareth and dwelt there (Luke ii. 39). Had the visit of the wise men occurred, as some think, six, or twelve, or eighteen months after the birth, the question of Herod to "the chief priests and scribes of the people" where "Christ *should be born*," would have been quite vain, as the infant might have been removed long before to another part of the country. The wise men manifestly expected to see a *newly-born* infant, and hence they asked, "Where is he that *is born* King of the Jews?" (Matt. ii. 2.) The evangelist also states expressly that they came to Jerusalem "*when Jesus was born*" (Matt. ii. 1). At a subsequent period they would have found the Holy Child, not at Bethlehem, but at Nazareth.

The only plausible objection to this view of the matter is derived from the statement that Herod "sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem and in all the coasts thereof, *from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men*" (Matt. ii. 16). The king had ascertained from these sages "what time the star appeared" (Matt. ii. 7), and they seem to have informed him that it had been visible a year before. A Jewish child was said to be two years old *when it had entered on its second year* (see Greswell's "Dissertations," vol. ii., 136); and, to make sure of his prey, Herod murdered all the infants in Bethlehem and the neighborhood under the age of thirteen months. The wise men had not told him that the child was a year old—it was obvious that they thought very differently—but the tyrant butchered all who came within the range of suspicion. It is highly probable that the star announced the appearance of the Messiah twelve months before he was born. Such an intimation was given of the birth of Isaac, who was a remarkable type of Christ. Gen. xvii. 21. See also 2 Kings iv. 16, and Dan. iv. 29, 33.

The presentation of the infant in the temple occurred *after the death of Herod.* This follows as a corollary from what has been already advanced, for if the wise men visited Bethlehem immediately after the birth, and if the child was then hurried away to Egypt, the presentation could not have taken place earlier. The ceremony was performed *forty days after the*

birth (Luke ii. 22, and Lev. xii. 2, 3, 4), and as the flight and the return might both have been accomplished in ten or twelve days, there was ample time for a sojourn of two or three weeks in that part of Egypt which was nearest to Palestine. Herod died during this brief exile, and yet his demise happened so soon before the departure of the holy family on their way home, that the intelligence had not meanwhile reached Joseph by the voice of ordinary fame; and until his arrival in the land of Israel, he did not even know that Archelaus reigned in Judea (Matt. ii. 22). He inferred from the dream that the dynasty of the Herodian family had been completely subverted, so that when he heard of the succession of Archelaus "he was afraid" to enter his territory; but, at this juncture, being "counselled of God" in another dream, he took courage, proceeded on his journey, and, after the presentation in the temple, "returned into the parts of Galilee."

That the presentation in the temple took place after the death of Herod is further manifest from the fact that the babe remained uninjured, though his appearance in the sacred courts awakened uncommon interest, and though Anna "spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke ii. 38). Herod had his spies in all quarters, and had he been yet living, the intelligence of the presentation and of its extraordinary accompaniments, must have soon reached his ears, and he would have made some fresh attempt upon the life of the infant. But when the babe was actually brought to the temple, the tyrant was no more. Jerusalem was in a state of great political excitement, and Archelaus had, perhaps, already set sail for Rome to secure from the emperor the confirmation of his title to the kingdom (see Josephus' "Antiq." xvii. c. 9), so that it is not strange if the declarations of Simeon and Anna did not attract any notice on the part of the existing rulers.

Assuming, then, that Christ was born a very short time before the death of Herod, we have now to ascertain the date of the demise of that monarch. Josephus states ("Antiq." xiv. 14, § 5) that Herod was made king by the Roman Senate in the 184th Olympiad, when Calvinus and Pollio were consuls, that is, in the year of Rome 714; and that he reigned thirty-seven years ("Antiq." xvii. 8, § 1). We may infer, therefore, that his reign terminated in the year 751 of the city of Rome. He died shortly before the passover; his disease was of a very lingering character; and he appears to have languished under it upwards of a year (Josephus' "Antiq." xvii. 6, §§ 4, 5, and xvii. 9, §§ 2, 3). The passover of 751 fell on the 31st of March (see Greswell's "Dissertations," vol. i., p. 331), and as our Lord was in all likelihood born early in the month, the Jewish king probably ended his days a week or two afterward, or about the time of the vernal equinox. According to this computation the *conception* took place at the feast of Pentecost, which fell, in 750, on the 31st of May.

This view is corroborated by Luke iii. 1, where it is said that the word

of God came to John the Baptist "in the *fifteenth year* of the reign of Tiberius Cesar." John's ministry had continued only a short time when he was imprisoned, and then Jesus "began to be *about thirty* years of age" (Luke iii. 23). Augustus died in August 767, and this year 767, according to a mode of reckoning then in use (see Hales' "Chronology," i. 49, 171, and Luke xxiv. 21), was the *first year* of his successor, Tiberius. The *fifteenth year* of Tiberius, according to the same mode of calculation, commenced on the 1st of January, 781 of the city of Rome, and terminated on the 1st of January, 782. If our Lord was born about the 1st of March, 751 of Rome, and if the Baptist was imprisoned early in 781, Jesus then "began to be about thirty years of age." This view is further confirmed by the fact that Quirinius, or Cyrenius, mentioned in Luke ii. 2, was *first* governor of Syria from the *close* of the year 750 of Rome to 753. (See Merivale, iv., p. 457, note.) Our Lord was born under his administration, and according to the date we have assigned to the nativity, the "taxing" at Bethlehem took place a few months after Cyrenius entered into office.

This view of the date of the birth of Christ, which differs somewhat from that of any writer with whom I am acquainted, meets all the difficulties connected with this much-disputed question. It is based partly upon the principle so ingeniously advocated by Whiston in his "Chronology," that the flight into Egypt took place before the presentation in the temple. I have never yet met with any antagonist of that hypothesis able to give a satisfactory explanation of the text on which it rests. Some other dates assigned for the birth of Christ are quite inadmissible. In Judea shepherds are not found "abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night" (Luke ii. 8) in November, December, January, or, perhaps, February; but in March, and especially in a mild season, such a thing is quite common. (See Greswell's "Dissertations," vol. i., p. 391, and Robinson's "Biblical Researches," vol. ii., pp. 97, 98.) Hippolytus, one of the earliest Christian writers who touches on the subject, indicates that our Lord was born about the time of the passover. (See Greswell, i., 461, 462.)

CHAPTER III.

THE TWELVE AND THE SEVENTY.

It has often been remarked that the personal preaching of our Lord was comparatively barren. The effects produced were not what might have been expected from so wonderful a ministry; but it had been predicted that the Messiah was to be "despised and *rejected* of men,"[1] and the unbelief of the Jews constituted one of the trials He was ordained to suffer during His abode on earth. "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified."[2] We have, certainly, no evidence that any of His discourses made such an impression as that which accompanied the address of Peter on the day of Pentecost. Immediately after the outpouring of the Spirit at that period an abundant blessing followed the proclamation of the Gospel. But though Jesus often mourned over the obduracy of His countrymen, and though the truth, when preached by His disciples, was often more effective than when uttered by Himself, it can not with propriety be said that His own evangelical labors were quite unfruitful. The one hundred and twenty, who met in an upper room during the interval, between His Ascension and the day of Pentecost,[3] were but a portion of His followers. The fierce and watchful opposition of the Sanhedrim had kept Him generally at a distance from Jerusalem; it was there specially dangerous to profess an attachment to His cause; and we may thus partially account for the paucity of His adherents in the Jewish metropolis. His converts were more numerous in Galilee; and it was, probably, in that district He appeared to the company of upwards of five hundred brethren who saw Him after

[1] Isa. liii. 3. [2] John vii. 39. [3] Acts i. 15.

His resurrection.[1] He had itinerated extensively as a missionary; and, from some statements incidentally occurring in the Gospels, we infer that individuals had imbibed His doctrines in the cities and villages of almost all parts of Palestine.[2] In a statistical point of view, His ministry was "the day of small things"; and yet it was not absolutely barren: for, during the three years of its duration, He enlisted and sent forth no less than eighty-two preachers. Part of these have since been known as "The Twelve," and the rest as "The Seventy."

The Twelve are frequently mentioned in the New Testament, and yet the information we possess respecting them is exceedingly scanty. Of some we know little more than their names. It is thought that a town called Kerioth,[3] or Karioth, belonging to the tribe of Judah, was the birthplace of Judas, the traitor;[4] but all His colleagues were natives of Galilee.[5] Some of them had various names; and the consequent diversity which the sacred catalogues present has frequently perplexed the reader of the evangelical narratives. Matthew was also called Levi;[6] Nathanael was designated Bartholomew;[7] and Jude had the two other names of Lebbæus and Thaddæus.[8] Thomas was called Didymus,[9] or *the twin*, in reference to the circumstances of his birth; James the son of Alphæus was styled, perhaps by way of distinction, James

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 6.

[2] See Matt. xv. 31; John ii. 23, vii. 31, viii. 30.

[3] See Joshua xv. 25.

[4] Hence called Iscariot, that is, *Ish Kerioth*, or, a man of Kerioth. See Alford, "Greek Test.," Matt. x. 4.

[5] Acts ii. 7.

[6] Compare Matt. ix. 9, 10, and Mark ii. 14, 15.

[7] "As St. John never mentions Bartholomew in the number of the apostles, so the other evangelists never take notice of Nathanael, probably because the same person under two several names; and as in John, Philip and Nathanael are joined together in their coming to Christ, so in the rest of the evangelists, Philip and Bartholomew are constantly put together without the least variation."—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles*, Life of Bartholomew. Compare Matt. x. 3; Acts i. 13; and John i. 45, xxi. 2.

[8] Compare Matt. x. 3, and Acts i. 13.

[9] John xi. 16, xxi. 2.

"the Less"[1]—in allusion to the inferiority of his stature; the other James and John were surnamed Boanerges,[2] or the sons of thunder—a title indicative of the peculiar solemnity and power of their ministrations; and Simon stands at the head of all the lists, and is expressly said to be "first" of the Twelve,[3] because whilst his advanced age warranted him to claim precedence, his superior energy and promptitude enabled him to occupy the most prominent position. The same individual is called Cephas, or Peter, or *Stone*,[4] on account of the firmness of his character. His namesake, the other Simon, is termed the Canaanite, and also Zelotes,[5] or the zealot—a title expressive of the zeal and earnestness with which he was wont to carry out his principles. Our Lord sent forth the Twelve "by two and two,"[6] but we are not told whether He observed any general rule in the arrangement of those who travelled in company. The relationship of the parties to each other, at

[1] Mark xv. 40. According to some he was related to our Lord, and hence called His brother (Gal. i. 19). But though Mary, the mother of our Saviour, had evidently several sons (see Matt. i. 20, 25, compared with Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3; Matt. xii. 46, 47), they were not disciples when the apostles were appointed, and none of them consequently could have been of the Twelve. (See John vii. 5.) The other sons of Mary, who were all younger than Jesus, seem to have been converted about the time of the resurrection. Hence they are found among the disciples before the day of Pentecost (Acts i. 14). On this subject see an able article in the *Princeton Review* for January, 1865, pp. 1–53. See also Alford's "New Testament," iv., Prol. 89–97.

[2] Mark iii. 17. [3] Matt. x. 2. [4] John i. 42.

[5] Matt. x. 4; Mark iii. 18; Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13. Some think that *Kananites* is equivalent to *Zelotes*, whilst others contend that it is derived from a village called Canan. See Alford, "Greek Test.," Matt. x. 4; and Greswell's "Dissertations," vol. ii., p. 128. Some MSS. have *Καναναῖος*.

[6] Mark vi. 7. "Although no two of these catalogues (of the Twelve) agree precisely in the order of the names, they may all be divided into three quaternions, which are never interchanged, and the leading names of which are the same in all. Thus the first is always Peter, the fifth Philip, the ninth James the son of Alpheus, and the twelfth Judas Iscariot. Another difference is that Matthew and Luke's Gospel gives the names in pairs, or two and two, while Mark enumerates them singly, and the list before us (in the Acts) follows both these methods, one after the other."—*Alexander on the Acts*, vol. i., p. 19.

least in three instances, suggested a classification; as Peter and Andrew, James and John, James the Less and Jude were, respectively, brothers. Some of the disciples, such as Andrew,[1] and John,[2] had previously been disciples of the Baptist; but their separation from their former master and adherence to Jesus did not lead to any estrangement between our Lord and His pious forerunner. As the Baptist contemplated the more permanent and important character of the Messiah's mission, he could cheerfully say, "He must increase, but I must decrease."[3]

All the Twelve, when enlisted as disciples of Christ, moved in the humbler walks of life; and yet we are not warranted in asserting that they were extremely indigent. Peter, the fisherman, indicates that, in regard to worldly circumstances, he had been a loser by obeying the call of Jesus.[4] Though James and John were likewise fishermen, the family had at least one little vessel of their own, and they could afford to pay "hired servants" to assist them in their business.[5] Matthew acted, in a subordinate capacity, as a collector of imperial tribute; but though the Jews cordially hated a functionary who brought so painfully to their recollection their condition as a conquered people, the publican was engaged in a lucrative employment. Zacchæus, a "chief among the publicans,"[6] was a rich man;[7] and Matthew was able to give an entertainment in his own house to a numerous company.[8] Still, however, the Twelve, as a body, were qualified, neither by their education nor their habits, for acting as popular instructors; and had the Gospel been a device of human wisdom, it could not have been promoted by their advocacy. Individuals who had hitherto been occupied in tilling the land, in fishing, and in mending nets, or in sitting at the receipt of custom, were not fitted to make any great impression as ecclesiastical reformers. Their posi-

[1] John i. 35, 40.

[2] From the great minuteness of the statements in the passage, it has been inferred that the evangelist himself was the second of the two disciples mentioned in John i. 35–37.

[3] John iii. 30. [4] Matt. xix. 27. [5] Mark i. 20.

[6] Luke xix. 2. [7] Luke xix. 2. [8] Mark ii. 21.

tion in society gave them no influence; their natural talents were not particularly brilliant; and even their dialect betokened their connection with a district from which nothing good or great was anticipated.[1] But God exalted these men of low degree, and made them the spiritual illuminators of the world.

Though the New Testament enters very sparingly into the details of their personal history, it is plain that the Twelve presented a considerable variety of character. Thomas, though obstinate, was warm-hearted and manly. Once when, as he imagined, his Master was going forward to certain death, he chivalrously proposed to his brethren that they should all perish along with Him;[2] and though at first he doggedly refused to credit the account of the resurrection,[3] yet, when his doubts were removed, he gave vent to his feelings in one of the most impressive testimonies[4] to the power and godhead of the Messiah to be found in the whole book of revelation. Nathanael was frank and candid—"an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile."[5] Our Lord bestowed on Peter and the two sons of Zebedee peculiar proofs of confidence and favor, for they alone were permitted to witness some of the most remarkable scenes in the history of the Man of Sorrows.[6] Though these three brethren displayed such a congeniality of disposition, they did not possess minds of the same mould, but each had excellences of his own which threw a charm around his character. Peter yielded to the impulse of the moment and acted with promptitude and vigor; James became the first of the apostolic martyrs, probably because by his ability and boldness, as a preacher, he had provoked the special enmity of Herod and the Jews;[7] whilst the benevolent John delighted to meditate on the "deep things of God," and listened with profound emotion to his Master as He discoursed

[1] John vii. 52.
[2] John xi. 16. See also v. 8.
[3] John xx. 25.
[4] John xx. 28.
[5] John i. 47.
[6] Mark v. 37, ix. 2; Matt. xxvi. 37.
[7] Acts xii. 2, 3. "It is remarkable that, so far as we know, one of these inseparable brothers (James and John) was the first, and one the last, that died of the apostles."—*Alexander on the Acts*, i. 443.

of the mystery of His Person, and of the peace of believers abiding in His love. It has been conjectured that there was some family relationship between the sons of Zebedee and Jesus; but of this there is no satisfactory evidence.[1] It was simply, perhaps, the marked attention of our Saviour to James and John which awakened the ambition of their mother, and induced her to bespeak their promotion in the kingdom of the Son of Man.[2]

Though none of the Twelve had received a liberal education,[3] it can not be said that they were literally "novices" when invested with the ministerial commission. It is probable that, before they were invited to follow Jesus, they had all seriously turned their attention to the subject of religion; some of them had been previously instructed by the Baptist; and all, prior to their selection, had been about a year under the tuition of our Lord himself. From that time till the end of His ministry they lived with Him on terms of the most intimate familiarity. From earlier acquaintance, as well as from closer and more confidential companionship, they had a better opportunity of knowing His character and doctrines than the rest of His disciples. When, about six or eight months[4] after their appointment, they were sent forth as missionaries, they were commanded neither to walk in "the way of the Gentiles," nor to enter "into any city of the Samaritans," but to go "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."[5] Their number, *Twelve*, corresponded to the number of the tribes; and they were called *apostles*, in allusion to a class of Jewish functionaries who were so designated, for the High-Priest was wont to send forth from Jerusalem into foreign countries cer-

[1] See Greswell's "Dissertations," vol. ii., p. 115.

[2] Matt. xx. 20, 21.

[3] Some writers have asserted that Philip and Nathanael were learned men, but of this there is no good evidence. See Cave's "Lives of the Apostles," Philip and Bartholomew.

[4] Greswell makes it nine months. See his "Harmonia Evangelica," pp. xxiv. xxvi.

[5] Matt. x. 5, 6.

tain accredited agents, or messengers, styled apostles, on ecclesiastical errands.[1]

During the personal ministry of our Lord, the Twelve were employed by Him on only one missionary excursion. About twelve months after that event[2] He "appointed other seventy also" to preach His Gospel. Luke is the only evangelist who mentions the designation of these additional missionaries; and though we have no reason to believe that their duties terminated with the first tour in which they were engaged,[3] they are never subsequently noticed in the New Testament. Many of the actions of our Lord had a typical meaning, and He designed to inculcate an important truth by the appointment of these Seventy new apostles. According to the ideas of the Jews of that age there were *seventy* heathen nations;[4] and it is rather singular that, omitting Peleg, the progenitor of the Israelites, the names of the posterity of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, recorded in the 10th chapter of Genesis, amount exactly to seventy. "These," says the historian, "are the families of the sons of Noah, *after their generations, in their nations; and by these were the nations divided* in the earth after the flood."[5] Every one who looks into the narrative will perceive that the sacred writer does not propose to furnish a complete catalogue of the descendants of Noah, for he passes over in entire silence the posterity of the greater number of the

[1] See Vitringa, "De Synagoga Vetere," p. 577, and Mosheim's "Commentaries," by Vidal, vol. i., 120–2, note.

[2] This is the calculation of Greswell, "Harmonia Evangelica," pp. xxvi., xxxi. Robinson makes the interval considerably shorter. See his "Harmony of the Four Gospels in Greek."

[3] They received new powers at the close of their first missionary excursion. See Luke x. 19.

[4] Selden, in his treatise "De Synedriis," supplies some curious information on this subject. See lib. ii., cap. 9, § 3. See also some singular speculations respecting it in Baumgarten's "Theologischer Commentar zum Pentateuch," i. 153, 351. Some of the fathers speak of seventy-two disciples and of seventy-two nations and *tongues*. See Stieren's "Irenæus," i., p. 544, note, and Epiphanius, tom. i., p. 50, Edit. Coloniæ, 1682; compared with Greswell's "Dissertations," ii., p. 7.

[5] Gen. x. 32.

patriarch's grandchildren; he names only those who were *the founders of nations;* and thus it happens, that whilst, in a variety of instances, he does not trace the line of succession, he takes care, in others, to mention the father and many of his sons.[1] The Jewish notion current in the time of our Lord as

[1] The following tabular view of the names of the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, mentioned in the 10th chapter of Genesis, will illustrate this statement:

SHEM.				HAM.			
Elam.	Asshur.	Arphaxad,	Lud. Aram.	Cush,	Mizraim,	Phut.	Canaan,
		Salah,	Uz,	Seba,	Ludim,		Sidon,
		Eber,	Hul,	Havilah,	Anamim,		Heth,
		Peleg,	Gether,	Sabtah,	Lehabim,		Jebusite,
		Joktan,	Mash.	Raamah,	Naphtuhim,		Amorite,
		Almodad,		Sabtecha,	Pathrusim,		Girgasite,
		Sheleph,		Sheba,	Casluhim,		Hivite,
		Hazarmaveth.		Dedan,	Caphtorim,		Arkite,
		Jerah,		Nimrod.	Philistim.		Sinite,
		Hadoram,					Arvadite,
		Uzal,					Zemarite,
		Diklah,					Hamathite.
		Obal,					
		Abimael,					
		Sheba,					
		Ophir,					
		Havilah,					
		Jobab.					

JAPHETH.						
Gomer,	Magog.	Madai.	Javan,	Tubal.	Meshech.	Tiras.
Ashkenaz,			Elishah,			
Riphath,			Tarshish,			
Togarmah.			Kittim,			
			Dodanim.			

It often happens that one branch of a family is exceedingly prolific, whilst another is barren. So it was with the descendants of the three sons of Noah. Thus Elam, Asshur, and others, each founded only one nation, whilst Arphaxad and his posterity founded eighteen. This view of the matter is sustained by the authority of Augustine. "Why," says he, "when eight (seven?) sons of Japheth are enumerated, are the descendants of two of them only added? And when six (five?) sons of Shem are named, why are the posterity of two only annexed? Did the others remain without offspring? This can not be believed; but *they did not originate nations* on account of which they should be worthy of commemoration." *City of God,* book xvi. c. 3. Augustine here reckons according to the Septuagint, which assigns eight sons to Japheth and six to Shem.

to the existence of seventy heathen nations rested, therefore, on a sound historical basis, inasmuch as, according to the Mosaic statement, there were, besides Peleg, precisely seventy individuals by whom "the nations were divided in the earth after the flood." We may thus infer that our Lord meant to convey a great moral lesson by the appointment alike of the Twelve and of the Seventy. In the ordination of the Twelve He evinced His regard for all the tribes of Israel; in the ordination of the Seventy He intimated that His Gospel was designed for all the nations of the earth. When the Twelve entered on their first mission He required them to go only to the Jews, but He sent forth the Seventy "two and two before His face *into every city and place whither He himself would come.*"[1] Toward the commencement of His public career, He had induced many of the Samaritans to believe on Him,[2] whilst at a subsequent period His ministry had been blessed to Gentiles in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon;[3] and there is no evidence that in the missionary journey which He contemplated when He appointed the Seventy as His pioneers, He intended to confine His labors to His kinsmen of the seed of Abraham. It is highly probable that the Seventy were actually sent forth *from Samaria*,[4] and the instructions given them suggest that, in the circuit assigned to them, they were to visit certain districts lying north of Galilee of the Gentiles.[5] The personal ministry of our Lord had respect primarily and specially to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,[6] but His conduct in this case symbolically indicated the catholic character of His religion. He evinced His regard for the Jews by sending no less than twelve apostles to that one nation, but He did not Himself refuse to minister either to Samaritans or Gentiles; and to show that He was disposed to make provision for the general diffusion of His word, He "appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his

[1] Luke x. 1. [2] John iv. 39. [3] Mark vii. 24, 26, 30, 31.

[4] This is the opinion of Dr. Robinson. See his "Harmony." See also Luke ix. 51, 52, x. 33.

[5] Luke x. 13, 17, 18. [6] Matt. xv. 24.

face into every city and place whither he himself would come."

It is very clear that our Lord committed, in the first instance, to the Twelve the organization of the ecclesiastical commonwealth. The most ancient Christian church, that of the metropolis of Palestine, was modelled under their superintendence; and the earliest converts gathered into it, after His ascension, were the fruits of their ministry. Hence, in the Apocalypse, the wall of the "holy Jerusalem" is said to have "twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."[1] But it does not follow that others had no share in founding the spiritual structure. The Seventy also received a commission from Christ, and doubtless, after the death of their Master, they pursued their missionary labors with renovated ardor. That they were called apostles as well as the Twelve, can not be established by distinct testimony;[2] but it is certain that they were furnished with supernatural endowments;[3] and they are not overlooked in the description of the sacred writer when he represents the New Testament Church as "built upon the foundation of the *apostles and prophets*, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."[4]

The appointment of the Seventy, like that of the Twelve, was a typical act; and it is not therefore extraordinary that they are only once noticed in the sacred volume. Our Lord never intended to constitute two permanent corporations, limited, respectively, to twelve and seventy members, and

[1] Rev. xxi. 14.

[2] It is certain that some were called apostles who were not of the number of the Twelve. See Acts xiv. 4. In 1 Cor. xv. 5, 7, both "the Twelve," and "all the apostles," are mentioned, and it may be that the Seventy are included under the latter designation. Such was the opinion of Origen—*ἐπειτα τοῖς ἑτέροις παρὰ τοὺς δώδεκα ἀποστόλοις πᾶσι, τάχα τοῖς ἑβδομήκοντα.* "Contra Celsum," lib. ii. 65. See also "De Recta in Deum Fide," sec. i., Opera, tom i., p. 806.

[3] Luke x. 9, 16, 19, 24.

[4] Eph. ii. 20. See also Eph. iii. 5. It is evident, especially from the latter passage, that the *prophets* here spoken of belong to the New Testament Church.

empowered to transmit their authority to successors from generation to generation. After His death the symbolical meaning of the mission of the Seventy was explained, as the Gospel was soon transmitted to all the ends of the earth; and thus it was no longer necessary to refer to these representatives of the ministry of the universal Church. When the Twelve turned to the Gentiles, their number lost its significance, and from that date they accordingly ceased to fill up vacancies occurring in their society; and, as the Church assumed a settled form, the apostles were disposed to insist less and less on any special powers with which they had been originally furnished, and rather to place themselves on a level with the ordinary rulers of the ecclesiastical community. Hence we find them sitting in church courts with these brethren,[1] and desirous to be known not as apostles, but as elders.[2] We possess little information respecting either their official or their personal history. A very equivocal, and sometimes contradictory, tradition[3] is the only guide which even professes to point out to us where the greater number of them labored; and the same witness is the only voucher for the statements which describe how most of them finished their career. It is an instructive fact that no proof can be given from the sacred record, of the ordination, either by the Twelve or by the Seventy, of even one presbyter or pastor. With the exception of the laying on of hands upon the seven deacons,[4] no inspired writer mentions any act of the kind in which the Twelve ever engaged. The deacons were not *rulers* in the

[1] Acts xv. 6, xxi. 18.

[2] 1 Pet. v. 1; 2 John, ver. 1; 3 John, ver. 1. It is remarkable that Papias, one of the very earliest of the fathers, actually speaks of the apostles simply as *the elders*. See Euseb., book iii., chap. 39.

[3] Thus, Simon Zelotes is said to have travelled into Egypt and thence passed into Mesopotamia and Persia, where he suffered martyrdom; whilst, according to others, he travelled through Egypt to Mauritania, and thence to Britain, where he was crucified. See Cave's "Lives of the Apostles," Life of Simon the Zealot. No weight can be attached to such legends. Origen states that the apostle Thomas labored in Parthia, and Andrew in Scythia. "In Genesim," Opera, tom. ii., p. 24.

[4] Acts vi. 6.

Church, and therefore could not by ordination confer ecclesiastical power on others.

There is much meaning in the silence of the sacred writers respecting the official proceedings and the personal career of the Twelve and the Seventy. It thus becomes impossible for any one to make out a title to the ministry by tracing his ecclesiastical descent; for no contemporary records enable us to prove a connection between the inspired founders of our religion and those who were subsequently intrusted with the government of the Church. At the critical point where, had it been deemed necessary, we should have had the light of inspiration, we are left to wander in total darkness. We are thus shut up to the conclusion that the claims of those who profess to be heralds of the Gospel are to be tested by some other criterion than their ecclesiastical lineage. It is written, "*By their fruits* ye shall know them."[1] God alone can make a true minister;[2] and he who attempts to establish his right to feed the flock of Christ by appealing to his official genealogy miserably mistakes the source of his pastoral commission. It would, indeed, avail nothing, though a minister could prove his relationship to the Twelve or the Seventy by an unbroken line of ordinations, for some who at the time may have been able to deduce their descent from the apostles were amongst the most dangerous of the early heretics.[3] True religion is sustained, not by any human agency, but by that Eternal Spirit who quickens all the children of God, and who has preserved for them a pure Gospel in the writings of the apostles and evangelists. The perpetuity of the Church no more depends on the uninterrupted succession of its ministers than does the perpetuity of a nation depend on the continuance of the dynasty which may happen at a particular date to occupy the throne. As plants possess powers of reproduction enabling them, when a part decays, to throw it off, and to supply

[1] Matt. vii. 16. [2] Acts xxvi. 16; Luke x. 2; 1 Tim. i. 12.

[3] Such was Valentine, the most formidable of the Gnostic heresiarchs, said to be a disciple of Theodas, the companion of Paul. Clem. Alex., Strom. vii. Paul of Samosata and Arius were able to boast, at least as much as their antagonists, of their apostolic descent.

its place by a new and vigorous vegetation, so it is with the Church—the spiritual vine which the Lord has planted. Its government may degenerate into a corrupt tyranny by which its most precious liberties may be invaded or destroyed, but the freemen of the Lord are not bound to submit to any such domination. Were even all the ecclesiastical rulers to become traitors to the King of Zion, the Church would not therefore perish. The living members of the body of Christ should then repudiate the authority of their false overseers, and choose among themselves faithful men, competent to teach and to guide the spiritual community. The Divine Statute-book clearly warrants the adoption of such an alternative. "Beloved," says the apostle John, "believe not every spirit, but *try the spirits* whether they are of God. . . . . We are of God, *he that knoweth God heareth us;* he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error."[1] "If there come *any* unto you, and *bring not this doctrine*, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed; for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds."[2] Paul declares still more emphatically, "Though WE, or AN ANGEL FROM HEAVEN, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, *let him be accursed.* As we said before, so say I now again, If *any man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, *let him be accursed.*"[3]

In one sense neither the Twelve nor the Seventy had successors. All of them were called to preach the Gospel by the living voice of Christ himself; all had "companied" with Him during the period of His ministry; all had listened to His sermons; all had been spectators of His works of wonder; all were empowered to perform miracles; all seem to have conversed with Him after His resurrection; and all appear to have possessed the gift of inspired utterance.[4] But in another sense every "good minister of Jesus Christ" is a successor of these primitive preachers; for every true pastor is taught of God, and is moved by the Spirit to undertake the

[1] 1 John iv. 1, 6.
[2] 2 John x. 11.
[3] Gal. i. 8, 9.
[4] Luke x. 16.

service in which he is engaged, and is warranted to expect a blessing on the truth which he disseminates. As of old the descent from heaven of fire on the altar testified the Divine acceptance of the sacrifices, so now the descent of the Spirit, as manifested in the conversion of souls to God, is a sure token that the labors of the minister have the seal of the Divine approbation. The great Apostle of the Gentiles did not hesitate to rely on such a proof of his commission from heaven. "Need we," says he to the Corinthians, "epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men; forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart."[1] No true pastor will be left entirely destitute of such encouragement, and neither the Twelve nor the Seventy could produce credentials more trustworthy or more intelligible.

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 1–3.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL FROM THE DEATH OF CHRIST TO THE DEATH OF THE APOSTLE JAMES, THE BROTHER OF JOHN.

A.D 31 TO A.D. 44.

WHEN our Lord bowed His head on the cross and "gave up the ghost," the work of atonement was complete. The ceremonial law virtually expired when He explained, by His death, its awful significance; and the crisis of His passion was the birthday of the Christian economy. At this date the history of the New Testament Church properly commences.

After His resurrection Jesus remained forty days on earth,[1] and, during this interval, He often took occasion to point out to His disciples the meaning of His wonderful career. He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, *beginning at Jerusalem*."[2] The inspired narratives of the teaching and miracles of our Lord are emphatically corroborated by the fact, that a large Christian Church was established, almost immediately after His decease, in the metropolis of Palestine. The Sanhedrim and the Roman governor had concurred in His condemnation; and, on the night of His trial, even the intrepid Peter had been so intimidated that he had been tempted to curse and to swear as he averred that he knew not "The Man." It might have been expected that the death of Jesus would be followed

[1] Acts i. 3.

[2] Luke xxiv. 46, 47.

by a reign of terror, and that no attempt would be made, at least in the place where the civil and ecclesiastical authorities resided, to assert the Divine mission of Him whom they had crucified as a malefactor. But perfect love casteth out fear. In the very city where He suffered, and a few days after His passion, His disciples ventured in the most public manner to declare His innocence and to proclaim Him as the Messiah. The result of their appeal was as wonderful as its boldness. Though the imminent peril of confessing Christ was well known, such was the strength of their convictions that multitudes resolved, at all hazards, to enroll themselves among His followers. The success which accompanied the preaching of the apostolic missionaries at the feast of Pentecost was a sign and a pledge of their future triumphs, for "the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."[1]

The disinterested behavior of the converts betokened their intense earnestness. "All that believed were together and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men, as every man had need."[2] These early disciples were not, indeed, required, as a term of communion, to deposit their property in a common stock-purse; but, in the overflowings of their first love, they spontaneously adopted the arrangement. On the part of the more opulent members of the community residing in a place which was the stronghold of Jewish prejudice and influence, this course was as prudent as it was generous. By joining a proscribed sect they put their lives, as well as their wealth, into jeopardy; but, by the sale of their effects, they displayed a spirit of self-sacrifice which astonished and confounded their adversaries. They thus anticipated all attempts at spoliation, and gave a proof of their readiness to submit to any suffering for the cause they had espoused. An inheritance, when turned into money, was not easily sequestered; and those who were in want could obtain assistance out of the secreted treasure. Still, even at this period, the principle of a community of goods was not carried out into universal opera-

[1] Acts ii. 41. [2] Acts ii. 44, 45.

tion; for the foreign Jews converted to the faith, and "possessors of lands or houses"[1] in distant countries, could neither have found purchasers, nor negotiated transfers, in the holy city. The first sales were obviously confined to those members of the Church who were owners of property in Jerusalem and its neighborhood.

The system of having all things common, suggested in a crisis of extreme peril, was only a temporary expedient; and it was soon given up altogether, as unsuited to the ordinary circumstances of the Christian Church. But though, in a short time, the disciples in general were left to depend on their own resources, the community continued to provide a fund for the help of the infirm and the destitute. At an early period complaints were made respecting the distribution of this charity; and "there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration."[2] The *Grecians*, or those converts from Judaism who used the Greek language, were generally of foreign birth; and as the *Hebrews*, or the brethren who spoke the vernacular tongue of Palestine, were natives of the country, there were suspicions that local influence secured for their poor an undue share of the public bounty. The expedient employed for the removal of this "root of bitterness" seems to have been completely successful. "The twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."[3]

Had the apostles been anxious for power they would themselves have nominated the deacons. They could have urged, too, a very plausible apology for venturing upon such an exercise of patronage. They might have pleaded that the disciples were dissatisfied with each other—that the excitement of a

[1] See Acts iv. 34. Barnabas was probably obliged to go to Cyprus to complete the sale.

[2] Acts vi. 1.

[3] Acts vi. 2, 3.

popular election was fitted to increase this feeling of alienation —and that, under these circumstances, prudence required them to take upon themselves the responsibility of the appointment. But they were guided by a higher wisdom; and their conduct is a model for the imitation of ecclesiastical rulers in all succeeding generations. It was the will of the Great Lawgiver that His Church should possess a free constitution; and accordingly, at the very outset, its members were intrusted with the privilege of self-government. The community had already been invited to choose an apostle in the room of Judas,[1] and they were now required to name office-bearers for the management of their money transactions. But, whilst the Twelve appealed to the suffrages of the Brotherhood, they reserved to themselves the right of confirming the election; and they could, by withholding ordination, have refused to fiat an improper appointment. Happily no such difficulty occurred. In compliance with the instructions addressed to them, the multitude chose seven of their number "whom they set before the apostles; and, when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them."[2]

Prior to the election of the deacons, Peter and John had been incarcerated. The Sanhedrim wished to extort from them a pledge that they would "not speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus,"[3] but the prisoners nobly refused to consent to any such compromise. They "answered and said unto them, Whether it would be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."[4] The apostles here disclaimed the doctrine of passive obedience, and asserted principles which lie at the foundation of the true theory of religious freedom. They maintained that "God alone is Lord of the conscience"—that His command overrides all human regulations—and that, no matter what may be the penalties which earthly rulers annex to the breach of the enactments of their statute-book, the Christian is not bound to obey, when the civil law requires him to violate his enlightened convic-

[1] Acts i. 15, 23. They selected two, and not knowing which to prefer, they decided by lot.

[2] Acts vi. 6. [3] Acts iv. 18. [4] Acts iv. 19.

tions. But the Sanhedrim despised such considerations. For a time they were obliged to remain quiescent, as public feeling ran strongly in favor of the new preachers; but, soon after the election of the deacons, they resumed the work of persecution. The tide of popularity now began to turn; and Stephen, one of the Seven, particularly distinguished by his zeal, fell a victim to their intolerance.

The martyrdom of Stephen occurred about three years and a half after the death of our Lord.[1] Daniel had foretold that the Messiah should "confirm the covenant with many *for one week*"[2]—an announcement which has been understood to indicate that, at the time of his manifestation, the Gospel should be preached with much success among his countrymen *for seven years*—and if the prophetic week commenced with the ministry of John the Baptist, it probably terminated with this bloody tragedy.[3] The Christian cause had hitherto prospered in Jerusalem; and, meanwhile, it had also made considerable progress throughout all Palestine; but at this date it is suddenly arrested in its career of advancement. The Jewish multitude begin to regard it with aversion; and the Roman governor discovers that he may, at any time, obtain the tribute of their applause by oppressing its ablest and most fearless advocates.

After His resurrection our Lord commanded the apostles to

[1] That is, A.D. 34, dating the crucifixion A.D. 31. Tillemont, but on entirely different grounds, assigns the same date to the martyrdom of Stephen. See "Mémoires pour servir à L'Histoire Ecclésiastique des Six Premiers Siècles," tome prem. sec. par. p. 420. Stephen's martyrdom probably occurred about the feast of Tabernacles.

[2] Daniel ix. 27. A *day* in prophetic language denotes a *year*. Ezek. iv. 4, 5. A prophetic week, or seven days, is, therefore, equivalent to seven years.

[3] "The one week, or Passion-week, in the midst of which our Lord was crucified, A.D. 31, began with His public ministry, A.D. 28, and ended with the martyrdom of Stephen, A.D. 34."—*Hales' Chronology*, ii. p. 518. Faber and others, who hold that the one week terminated with the crucifixion, are obliged to adopt the untenable hypothesis that John the Baptist and our Lord together preached seven years. The view here taken is corroborated by the statement in Dan. ix. 27: "*In the midst of the week* he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease," as Christ by one sacrifice of Himself "perfected forever them that are sanctified."

go and "teach *all nations*," [1] and yet years rolled away before they turned their thoughts toward the evangelization of the Gentiles. The Jewish mind was slow to apprehend such an idea, for the posterity of Abraham had been long accustomed to regard themselves as the exclusive heirs of divine privileges; but the remarkable development of the kingdom of God gradually led them to entertain more enlarged and more liberal sentiments. The progress of the Gospel in Samaria immediately after the death of Stephen, demonstrated that the blessings of the new dispensation were not to be confined to God's ancient people. Though many of the Samaritans acknowledged the divine authority of the writings of Moses, they did not belong to the Church of Israel; and between them and the Jews a bitter antipathy had hitherto existed. When Philip appeared among them, and preached Jesus as the promised Messiah, they listened most attentively to his appeals, and not a few of them gladly received Christian baptism.[2] It could now no longer be said that the Jews had "no dealings with the Samaritans," [3] for the Gospel gathered both into the fold of a common Saviour, and taught them to keep "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

When the disciples were scattered abroad by the persecution which arose after the martyrdom of Stephen, the apostles still kept their post in the Jewish capital; [4] for Christ had instructed them to begin their ministry in that place: [5] and they perhaps conceived that, until authorized by some farther intimation, they were bound to remain at Jerusalem. But the conversion of the Samaritans reminded them that the sphere of their labors was more extensive. Our Lord had said to them, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and *unto the uttermost part of the earth*," [6] and events which were passing before their view were continually throwing additional light on the meaning of this announcement. The baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch,[7] about this period, was calculated to enlarge their ideas; and the

[1] Matt. xxviii. 19.
[2] Acts viii. 6, 12.
[3] John iv. 9.
[4] Acts viii. 1.
[5] Luke xxiv. 47; Acts i. 4.
[6] Acts i. 8.
[7] Acts viii. 27–38.

baptism of Cornelius pointed out, still more distinctly, the wide range of their evangelical commission. The minuteness with which the case of the devout centurion is described is a proof of its importance as connected with this transition-stage in the history of the Church. He had before known nothing of Peter; and, when they met at Cæsarea, each could testify that he had been prepared for the interview by a special revelation from heaven.[1] Cornelius was "a centurion of the band called the *Italian* band"[2]—he was a representative of that military power which then ruled the world—and, in his baptism, we see the Roman empire presenting, on the altar of Christianity, the first-fruits of the Gentiles.

It was not, however, very obvious, from any of the cases already enumerated, that the salvation of Christ was designed for all classes and conditions of the human family. The Samaritans did not, indeed, worship at Jerusalem, but they claimed some interest in "the promises made unto the fathers"; and they conformed to many of the rites of Judaism. It does not appear that the Ethiopian eunuch was of the seed of Abraham; but he acknowledged the inspiration of the Old Testament, and he was disposed, at least to a certain extent, to observe its institutions. Even the Roman centurion was what has been called a *proselyte of the gate*, that is, he professed the Jewish theology — "he feared God with all his house,"[3] though he had not received circumcision, and had not been admitted into the congregation of Israel. But the time was approaching when the Church was to burst forth beyond the barriers within which it had been hitherto enclosed; and an individual now appeared upon the scene who was to be the leader of this new movement. He is "a citizen of no mean city,"[4]—a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, a place famous for its educational institutes[5]—and he is known, by way of distinction, as "an apostle of *the nations*."[6]

The apostles were at first sent only to their own countrymen;[7] and for some time after our Lord's death, they did not

[1] Acts x. 19, 30, 32.
[2] Acts x. 1.
[3] Acts x. 2.
[4] Acts xxi. 39.
[5] Strabo, xiv. p. 673.
[6] Rom. xi. 13; 1 Tim. ii. 7; 2 Tim. i. 11.
[7] Matt. x. 5, 6.

contemplate any more comprehensive mission. When Peter called on the disciples to appoint a successor to Judas, he acted under the conviction that the company of the Twelve was to be maintained in its integrity, and that it must still exactly represent the number of the tribes of Israel. But the Jews, after the death of Stephen, evinced an increasing aversion to the Gospel; and as the apostles were eventually induced to direct their views elsewhere, they were also led to abandon an arrangement which had a special reference to the sectional divisions of the chosen people. Meanwhile, too, the management of ecclesiastical affairs had partially fallen into other hands; new missions, in which the Twelve had no share, had been undertaken; and Paul henceforth becomes most conspicuous and successful in extending and organizing the Church.

Paul describes himself as "one born out of due time."[1] He was converted to Christianity when his countrymen seemed about to be consigned to judicial blindness; and he was "called to be an apostle"[2] when others had been laboring for years in the same vocation. But he possessed peculiar qualifications for the office. He was ardent, energetic, and conscientious, as well as acute and eloquent. In his native city, Tarsus, he had received a good elementary education; and afterward, "at the feet of Gamaliel,"[3] in Jerusalem, he enjoyed the tuition of a Rabbi of unrivalled celebrity. The apostles of the Gentiles had much the same religious experience as the father of the German Reformation; for as Luther, before he understood the doctrine of a free salvation, attempted to earn a title to heaven by the austerities of monastic discipline, so Paul in early life was "taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers,"[4] and "after the strictest sect of his religion lived a Pharisee."[5] His zeal led him to become a persecutor; and when Stephen was stoned, the witnesses required to take part in the execution prepared themselves for the work of death by laying down their upper garments at the feet of the "young man" Saul.

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 8. [2] Rom. i. 1. [3] Acts xxii. 3.
[4] Acts xxii. 3. [5] Acts xxvi. 5. [6] Acts vii. 58.

He had established himself in the confidence of the Sanhedrim, and he may have been a member of that influential judicatory, for he tells us that he "shut up many of the saints in prison," and that, when they were put to death, "he gave his voice, or his *vote*,[1] against them"—a statement implying that he belonged to the court which pronounced the sentence of condemnation. As he was travelling to Damascus armed with authority to seize any of the disciples whom he discovered in that city, and to convey them bound to Jerusalem,[2] the Lord appeared to him in the way, and he was suddenly converted.[3] After reaching the end of his journey, and boldly proclaiming his attachment to the party he had been so recently endeavoring to exterminate, he retired into Arabia,[4] where he probably spent three years in the devout study of the Christian theology. He then returned to Damascus, and entered, about A.D. 37,[5] on those missionary labors, which he prosecuted with so much efficiency and perseverance for upwards of a quarter of a century.

Paul declares that he derived a knowledge of the Gospel immediately from Christ;[6] and though for many years he had very little intercourse with the Twelve, he avers that he was "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles."[7] Throughout

[1] Acts xxvi. 10. Ψῆφον. See Alford on Acts xxvi. 10, and Acts viii. 1. See also "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul," by Conybeare and Howson, i. 85. Edit., London, 1852. Paul says that "all the Jews" knew his manner of life *from his youth*—a declaration which implies that he was a person of note. See Acts xxvi. 4. There is a tradition that he aspired to be the son-in-law of the high-priest. Epiphanius, "Ad Haer," 1, 2, § 16 and § 25.

[2] Acts ix. 2, and xxii. 5. [3] Acts ix. 3–21. [4] Gal. i. 17, 18.

[5] This date may be established thus:—Stephen, as has been shown, was martyred A.D. 34. See note, p. 49 of this chapter. Paul was converted in the same year, and therefore, if he returned to Damascus three years afterward, he was in that city in A.D. 37. It would appear, from another source of evidence, that this is the true date. The Emperor Tiberius died A.D. 37, and Aretas immediately afterward obtained possession of Damascus. He was in possession of it when Paul was there. See 2 Cor. xi. 32, 33. It is probable that he remained master of the place only a very short time.

[6] Gal. i. 12. [7] 2 Cor. xi. 5.

life he was associated, not with them, but with others as his fellow-laborers; and he obviously occupied a distinct and independent position. When he was baptized, the ordinance was administered by an individual who is not previously mentioned in the New Testament,[1] and when he was separated to the work to which the Lord had called him,[2] the ordainers were "prophets and teachers," respecting whose own call to the ministry the inspired historian supplies us with no information. But they had, no doubt, been regularly introduced into the places which they are represented as occupying; they are all described by the evangelist as receiving the same special instructions from heaven; and the tradition that, at least some of them, were of the number of the Seventy,[3] is exceedingly probable. And if, as has already been suggested, the mission of the Seventy indicated the design of our Saviour to diffuse the Gospel all over the world, we can see a peculiar propriety in the arrangement that Paul was ushered into the Church under the auspices of these ministers.[4] It was most fitting that he who was to be, by way of eminence, the apostle of the Gentiles, should be baptized and ordained by men whose own appointment was intended to symbolize the catholic spirit of Christianity.

In the treatment of Paul by his unbelieving countrymen we have a most melancholy illustration of the recklessness of religious bigotry. These Jews knew that, in as far as secular considerations were concerned, he had everything to lose by turning into "the way which they called heresy"; they were bound to acknowledge that, by connecting himself with an odious sect, he at least demonstrated his sincerity and self-

[1] Acts ix. 17, 18.

[2] Acts xiii. 1, 2.

[3] Simeon or Niger, according to Epiphanius, was one of the Seventy. "Hæres," 20, sec. 4. Luke, the writer of the Book of the Acts, is said to have been one of the Seventy, and the same as Lucius of Cyrene, mentioned Acts xiii. 1.

[4] Ananias, by whom he was baptized, was, according to the Greek martyrologies, one of the Seventy. See Burton's "Lectures," i. 88, note. It is evident that Ananias was a person of note among the Christians of Damascus.

denial; but they were so exasperated by his zeal that they "took counsel to kill him."[1] When, after his sojourn in Arabia, he returned to Damascus, that city was in the hands of Aretas, the king of Arabia Petræa;[2] who contrived to gain possession of it during the confusion which immediately followed the death of the Emperor Tiberius. This petty sovereign courted the favor of the Jewish portion of the population by permitting them to persecute the disciples;[3] and the apostle, at this crisis, would have fallen a victim to their malignity had not his friends let him down "through a window, in a basket, by the wall,"[4] and thus enabled him to escape a premature martyrdom. He now repaired to Jerusalem, where the brethren had not heard of his conversion, and where they at first refused to acknowledge him as a member of their society;[5] for he had been obliged to leave Damascus with so much precipitation that he had brought with him no commendatory letters; but Barnabas, who is said to have been his school-fellow,[6] and who had in some way obtained information respecting his subsequent career, made the leaders of the Mother Church acquainted with the wonderful change which had taken place in his sentiments and character, and induced them to admit him to fellowship. During this visit to the holy city, while he prayed in the temple, he was more fully instructed respecting his future destination. In a trance, he saw Jesus, who said to him, "Depart: for I will send thee *far hence unto the Gentiles.*"[7] Even had he not received this intimation, the murderous hostility of the Jews would have obliged him to retire. "When he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians, they went about to slay him. Which, when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus."[8]

[1] Acts ix. 23. [2] See Josephus' "Antiquities," xviii. 5.
[3] See Burton's "Lectures," i. 116, 117.
[4] 2 Cor. xi. 32, 33. [5] Acts ix. 26, 27.
[6] This statement rests on the authority of a monk of Cyprus, named Alexander, a comparatively late writer. See Burton's "Lectures," i. 56, note. [7] Acts xxii. 21. [8] Acts ix. 29, 30.

The apostle now labored for some years as a missionary in "the regions of Syria and Cilicia."[1] His native city and its neighborhood probably enjoyed a large share of his ministrations, and his exertions seem to have been attended with much success, for, soon afterward, the converts in these districts attract particular notice.[2] Meanwhile the Gospel was making rapid progress in the Syrian capital, and as Saul was considered eminently qualified for conducting the mission in that place, he was induced to proceed thither. "Then," says the sacred historian, "Barnabas departed to Tarsus to seek Saul, and when he had found him he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass that a whole year they assembled themselves with the Church, and taught much people; and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."[3]

The establishment of a Church in this city formed a new era in the development of Christianity. Antioch was a great commercial mart, with a large Jewish as well as Gentile population. It was virtually the capital of the Roman empire in the East; being the residence of the president or governor of Syria. Its climate was delightful, and its citizens, enriched by trade, were noted for their gayety and voluptuousness. In this flourishing metropolis many proselytes from heathenism were to be found in the synagogues of the Greek-speaking Jews, and the Gospel soon made rapid progress among these Hellenists. "Some of them (which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen) were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians,[4] preaching the Lord Jesus. And

[1] Gal. i. 21. [2] Acts xv. 23, 41. [3] Acts xi. 25, 26.

[4] Griesbach, Lachmann, Alford, and other critics of great note, here prefer Ἕλληνας to Ἑλληνιστάς, but the common reading is quite as well supported by the authority of manuscripts, and more in accordance with Acts xiv. 27, where Paul and Barnabas are represented long afterward as declaring to the Church of Antioch how God "had opened the door of faith *unto the Gentiles*." See an excellent vindication of the *textus receptus* in the *Journal of Sacred Literature* for January, 1857, No. viii., p. 285, by the Rev. W. Kay, M.A., Principal of Bishop's College, Calcutta. See, on the other side, Alford's Greek Test., vol. ii., Proleg. 29–31, late edition.

the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord."[1] The followers of Jesus at this time received a new designation. They had hitherto called themselves "brethren" or "disciples" or "believers," but now they "were called Christians" by some of the inhabitants of the Syrian capital. As the unconverted Jews did not admit that Jesus was the Christ, they were obviously not the authors of this appellation, and, in contempt, they probably styled the party Nazarenes or Galileans; but it is easy to understand how the name was suggested to the pagans as most descriptive and appropriate. No one could be long in company with the new religionists without perceiving that Christ was "the end of their conversation." They delighted to tell of His mighty miracles, of His holy life, of the extraordinary circumstances which accompanied His death, and of His resurrection and ascension. Out of the fulness of their hearts they discoursed of His condescension and His meekness, of His wonderful wisdom, of His sublime theology, and of His unutterable love to a world lying in wickedness. When they prayed, they prayed to Christ; when they sang, they sang praise to Christ; when they preached, they preached Christ. Well then might the heathen multitude agree with one voice to call them *Christians*. The inventor of the title may have meant it as a nickname, but, if so, He who overruled the waywardness of Pilate, so that he wrote on the cross a faithful inscription,[2] also caused this mocker of His servants to stumble on a most truthful and complimentary designation.

From his first appearance in Antioch, Paul occupied a very influential position among his brethren. In that refined and opulent city, his learning, his dialectic skill, his prudence, and his pious ardor were all calculated to make his ministry most effective. About a year after his arrival there, he was deputed in company with a friend to visit Palestine on an errand of love. "In those days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth

[1] Acts xi. 20. [2] John xix. 19–22.

throughout all the world; which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren which dwelt in Judea. Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."[1]

This narrative attests that the principle of a community of goods was not recognized in the Church of Antioch; for the aid administered was supplied, not out of a general fund, but by "every man according to his ability." There was here no "murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews," as, in the spirit of true brotherhood, the wealthy Hellenists of Antioch cheerfully contributed to the relief of the poor Hebrews of their fatherland. It is not stated that "the elders," in whose hands the money was deposited, were all office-bearers connected with the Church of Jerusalem. These, of course, received no small share of the donations, but as the assistance was designed for the "brethren which dwelt *in Judea*," and not merely for the disciples in the holy city, we may infer that it was distributed among the elders of all the Churches now scattered over the southern part of Palestine.[2] Neither did Barnabas and Paul require to make a tour throughout the district to visit these various communities. All the elders of Judea still continued to observe the Mosaic law; and as the deputies from Antioch were in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover,[3] they found their brethren in attendance upon the festival.

It is reported by several ancient writers that the apostles were instructed to remain at Jerusalem for twelve years after the crucifixion of our Lord;[4] and if the tradition is correct, the holy city continued to be their stated residence till shortly before the arrival of these deputies from the Syrian capital. The time of this visit can be pretty accurately ascertained, and there is no point connected with the history of

[1] Acts xi. 27–30.

[2] It is obvious from Acts ix. 31, xxvi. 20, and Gal. i. 22, that such Churches now existed.

[3] Acts xii. 3, 24, 25.

[4] Clem. Alex., Strom. vi., p. 742, note; Edit. Potter. Eusebius, v. 18.

the book of the Acts respecting which there is such a close approximation to unanimity among chronologists; for, as Josephus notices,[1] both the sudden death of Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great, which now occurred,[2] and the famine against which this contribution was intended to provide, it is apparent from the date which he assigns to them that Barnabas and Saul reached Jerusalem about A.D. 44.[3] At this juncture at least two of the apostles—James the brother of John, and Peter—were in the Jewish capital, and all the rest had not yet finally taken their departure. The Twelve did not set out on distant missions until they were thoroughly convinced that they had ceased to make progress in the conversion of their countrymen in the land of their fathers. And it is no trivial evidence, at once of the strength of their convictions and of the truth of the evangelical history, that they continued so long and so efficiently to proclaim the Gospel in the chief city of Palestine. Had they not acted under an overwhelming sense of duty, they would not have remained in a place where their lives were in perpetual jeopardy; and, had they not been faithful witnesses, they could not have induced so many of all classes of society to believe statements which, if unfounded, would have been contradicted on the spot. The apostles were known to many in Jerusalem as the companions of our Lord; for, during His public ministry, they had often been seen with Him in the city and the temple; and, therefore, peculiar importance was attached to their testimony respecting His doctrines and His miracles. Their preaching in the headquarters of Judaism was fitted to exert an immense influence—as that metropolis itself contained a vast population, and as it was, besides, the resort of strangers from all parts of the world. And so long

[1] "Antiquities," xix. c. 8, § 2, xx. c. 2, § 5. [2] Acts xii. 20–23.

[3] From the comparative table of chronology appended to Wieseler's "Chronologie des apostolischen Zeitalters," it appears that the date given in the text is adopted by no less than twenty of the highest chronological authorities, including Ussher, Pearson, Spanheim, Tillemont, Michaelis, Hug, and De Wette. It is also adopted by Burton. Wieseler himself, on insufficient grounds, adopts A.D. 45.

as the apostles ministered in Jerusalem or in Palestine only to the house of Israel, it was expedient that their number, which was an index of the Divine regard for the whole of the twelve tribes, should be maintained in its integrity. But when, after preaching twelve years among their countrymen at home, they found their labors becoming comparatively barren; and when, driven by persecution from Judea, they proceeded on distant missions, their position was quite altered. Their number had at least partially[1] lost its original significance; and hence, when an apostle died, the survivors no longer deemed it necessary to take steps for the appointment of a successor. We find accordingly that when Herod "killed James, the brother of John, with the sword,"[2] no other individual was selected to occupy the vacant apostleship.

It has been already stated that when Paul was in Jerusalem for the first time after his conversion, he received, when praying in the temple, a divine communication informing him of his mission to the heathen.[3] During his present visit, as the bearer of the contributions from Antioch, he seems to have been favored with another revelation. In his Second Epistle to the Corinthians he refers to this most comfortable, yet mysterious, manifestation. "I know,"[4] says he, "a man in Christ fourteen years ago[5] (whether in the body, I can not tell, or whether out of the body, I can not tell; God knoweth) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a

[1] Though Peter was taught by the case of Cornelius that "God also to the Gentiles had granted repentance unto life" (Acts xi. 18), and, though he doubtless felt himself a debtor, both to the Greeks and to the Jews, yet still he continued to cherish the conviction that his mission was primarily to his kinsmen according to the flesh. James and John had the same impression. See Gal. ii. 9; James i. 1; 1 Pet. i. 1.

[2] Acts xii. 2.

[3] Acts xxii. 17–21.

[4] I here partially adopt the translation of Conybeare and Howson. Their work is one of the most valuable contributions to sacred literature of the present century. The revised version of the New Testament has much the same reading.

[5] The Second Epistle to the Corinthians was written about fourteen years after this, or toward the close of A.D. 57. See Chap. IX. of this Section. The Jews often reckoned current time as if it were complete.

man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I can not tell; God knoweth) that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for man to utter."[1] The present position of the apostle explains the design of this sublime and delightful vision. As Moses was encouraged to undertake the deliverance of his countrymen when God appeared to him in the burning bush,[2] and as Isaiah was emboldened to go forth, as the messenger of the Lord of hosts, when he saw Jehovah sitting upon His throne attended by the seraphim,[3] so Paul was stirred up by an equally impressive revelation to gird himself for the labors of a new appointment. He was about to commence a more extensive missionary career, and before entering upon so great and so perilous an undertaking, the King of kings condescended to encourage him by admitting him to a gracious audience, and by permitting him to enjoy some glimpses of the glory of those realms of light where "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 2–4. [2] Exodus iii. 2–10. [3] Isaiah vi. 1, 2, 8, 9.

CHAPTER V.

THE ORDINATION OF PAUL AND BARNABAS; THEIR MISSIONARY TOUR IN ASIA MINOR; AND THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM.

A.D. 44 to A.D. 51.

SOON after returning from Jerusalem to Antioch, Paul was formally invested with his new commission. His fellow-deputy, Barnabas, was appointed as his coadjutor in this important service. "Now," says the evangelist, "there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers, as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted, and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."[1]

Ten years had now elapsed since the conversion of Paul; and during the greater part of this period, he had been busily engaged in the dissemination of the Gospel. In the days of his Judaism the learned Pharisee had been accustomed to act as a teacher in the synagogues; and, when he became obedient to the faith, he was permitted to expound his new theology in the Christian assemblies. Barnabas, his companion, was a Levite;[2] and as his tribe was specially charged with the duty of public instruction,[3] he too had probably been a preacher before his conversion. Both these men were called of God to labor as evangelists, and the Head of the Church had already

[1] Acts xiii. 1–3. [2] Acts iv. 36. [3] Deut. xxxiii. 10.

abundantly honored their ministrations; but hitherto neither of them had been clothed with pastoral authority by any regular ordination. Their constant presence in Antioch was now no longer necessary, so that they were thus left at liberty to prosecute their missionary operations in the great field of heathendom; and at this juncture they were designated, in due form, to their "ministry and apostleship." "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." When we consider the present circumstances of these two brethren, we may see, not only why these instructions were given, but also why their observance has been so distinctly registered.

It is apparent that Barnabas and Saul were now called to a position of higher responsibility than that which they had previously occupied. They had heretofore acted simply as preachers of the Christian doctrine. Prompted by love to their common Master, and by a sense of individual obligation, they had endeavored to diffuse all around them a knowledge of the Redeemer. They taught in the name of Jesus, just because they possessed the gifts and the graces required for such a service; and, as their labors were acknowledged of God, they were encouraged to persevere. But they were now to go forth, as a solemn deputation, under the sanction of the Church; and not only to proclaim the truth, but also to baptize converts, to organize Christian congregations, and to ordain Christian ministers. It was, therefore, proper that, on this occasion, they should be regularly invested with the ecclesiastical commission.

On other grounds it was desirable that the mission of Barnabas and Paul should be thus inaugurated. Though the apostles had been lately driven from Jerusalem, and though the Jews were exhibiting increasing aversion to the Gospel, the Church was, notwithstanding, about to expand with extraordinary vigor by the ingathering of the Gentiles. In reference to these new members Paul and Barnabas pursued a bold and independent course, advocating views which many regarded as dangerous, latitudinarian, and profane; for they maintained that the ceremonial law was not binding on the

converts from heathenism. Their adoption of this principle exposed them to much suspicion and obloquy; and because of the tenacity with which they persisted in its vindication, not a few were disposed to question their credentials as expositors of the Christian faith. It was, therefore, expedient that their right to perform all the apostolic functions should be placed above challenge. In some way, not particularly described, their appointment by the Spirit of God was accordingly made known to the Church at Antioch; and thus all the remaining prophets and teachers, who officiated there, could distinctly testify that these two brethren had received a call from heaven to engage in the work to which they were now designated. Their ordination, in obedience to this divine communication, was a decisive recognition of their spiritual authority. The Holy Ghost had attested their commission, and the ministers of Antioch, by the laying on of hands, set their seal to the truth of the oracle. Their title to act as founders of the Church was thus authenticated by evidence which could not be legitimately disputed. Paul himself obviously attached considerable importance to this transaction, and he afterward refers to it in language of marked emphasis, when, in the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans, he introduces himself as "a servant of Jesus Christ, *called* to be an apostle, *separated unto the Gospel of God*."[1]

In the circumstantial record of this proceeding, to be found in the Acts of the Apostles, we have a proof of the wisdom of the Author of Revelation. He foresaw that the rite of "the laying on of hands" would be sadly abused; and that, represented as possessing something like a magic potency, it was to be at length converted, by a small class of ministers, into an ecclesiastical monopoly. He has, therefore, supplied us with an antidote against delusion, by permitting us, in this simple narrative, to scan its exact import. And what was the virtue of the ordination here described? Did it furnish Paul and Barnabas with a title to the ministry? Not at all. God himself had already called them to the work, and they could re-

[1] Rom. i. 1.

ceive no higher authorization. Did it necessarily add anything to the eloquence, or the prudence, or the knowledge, or the piety of the missionaries? No results of the kind were to be produced by any such ceremony. What, then, was its meaning? The evangelist himself furnishes an answer. The Holy Ghost required that Barnabas and Saul should be *separated* to the work to which the Lord had called them, and the laying on of hands was the *mode*, or *form*, in which they were set apart, or designated, to the office. This rite, to an Israelite, suggested grave and hallowed associations. When a Jewish father invoked a benediction on any of his family, he laid his hand upon the head of the child;[1] when a Jewish priest devoted an animal in sacrifice, he laid his hand upon the head of the victim;[2] and when a Jewish ruler invested another with office, he laid his hand upon the head of the new functionary.[3] The ordination of these brethren possessed all this significance. By the laying on of hands the ministers of Antioch implored a blessing on Barnabas and Saul, and announced their separation, or dedication, to the work of the Gospel, and intimated their investiture with ecclesiastical authority.

It is worthy of note that the parties who acted as ordainers were not dignitaries, planted here and there throughout the Church, and selected for this service on account of their official pre-eminence. They were all, at the time, connected with the Christian community assembling in the city which was the scene of the inauguration. No individual among them claimed the precedence; all engaged on equal terms in the performance of this interesting ceremony. We can not mistake the official standing of these brethren if we only mark the nature of the duties in which they were ordinarily occupied. They were "prophets and teachers"; they were sound scriptural expositors; some of them were endowed with the gift of prophetic interpretation; and they were all employed in imparting theological instruction. Though the name is not here expressly given to them, they were, at least virtually, "the elders who labored in the word and doctrine."[4] Paul, there-

[1] Gen. xlviii. 13–15.
[2] Lev. viii. 18, and iv. 4.
[3] Num. xxvii. 18.
[4] 1 Tim. v. 17.

fore, was ordained by the laying on of the hands of the *Presbytery* of Antioch.[1]

If the narrative of Luke was designed to illustrate the question of ministerial ordination, it plainly suggests that the power of Church rulers is very circumscribed. They have no right to refuse the laying on of hands to those whom God has called to the work of the Gospel, and who, by their gifts and graces, give credible evidences of their holy vocation; and they are not at liberty to admit the irreligious or incompetent to ecclesiastical offices. In the sight of the Most High the ordination to the pastorate of an individual morally and mentally disqualified is invalid and impious.

Immediately after their ordination Paul and Barnabas entered on their apostolic mission. Leaving Antioch they quickly reached Seleucia[2]—a city distant about twelve miles—and from thence passed on to Cyprus,[3] the native country of Barnabas.[4] They probably spent a considerable time in that large island. It contained several towns of note; it was the residence of great numbers of Jews; and the degraded state of its heathen inhabitants may be inferred from the fact that Venus was their tutelary goddess. The preaching of the apostles in this place created an immense sensation; their fame at length attracted the attention of persons of the highest distinction, and the heart of Paul was cheered by the accession of no less illustrious a convert than Sergius Paulus,[5] the Roman proconsul. Departing from Cyprus, Paul and Barnabas now set

[1] This portion of the apostolic history may illustrate 1 Tim. iv. 14, for Paul had official authority conferred on him "by prophecy," or in consequence of a revelation made, perhaps, through one of the prophets of Antioch, "with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery." Something similar, probably, occurred in the case of Timothy. But, in ordinary circumstances, the rulers of the Church must judge of a divine call to the ministry from the gifts and graces of the candidate for ordination.

[2] Acts xiii. 4. [3] Acts xiii. 4. [4] Acts iv. 36.

[5] Until this date we read of "Barnabas and Saul," now of "Paul and Barnabas." Paul was the Roman, and Saul the Hebrew name of the great apostle. His superior qualifications had now full scope for development, and accordingly, as he takes the lead, he is henceforth generally named before Barnabas.

sail for Asia Minor, where they landed at Perga, in Pamphylia. Here John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas, by whom they had been hitherto accompanied, refused to proceed further. He seems to have been intimidated by the prospect of accumulating difficulties. From many, on religious grounds, they had reason to anticipate a most discouraging reception; and the land journey now before them was otherwise beset with dangers. Whilst engaged in it, Paul experienced those "perils of waters," or of "rivers,"[1] and "perils of robbers," which he afterward mentions; for the highlands of Asia Minor were infested with banditti, and the mountain streams often rose with frightful rapidity, and swept away the unwary stranger. John Mark returned to Jerusalem, and, at a subsequent period, we find Paul refusing, in consequence, to receive him as a travelling companion.[2] But though Barnabas was then dissatisfied because the apostle continued to be distrustful of his relative, and though "the contention was so sharp" between these two eminent heralds of the cross that "they departed asunder one from the other,"[3] the return of this young minister from Perga led to no change in their present arrangements. Continuing their journey into the interior of the country, they preached in Antioch of Pisidia, in Iconium, in "Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia," and in "the region that lieth round about."[4] When they had proceeded thus far, they began to retrace their steps, and again visited the places where they had previously succeeded in collecting congregations. They now supplied their converts with a settled ministry. When they had presided in every church at an appointment of elders,[5] in which the choice was determined by popular suffrage,[6] and when they had prayed with fasting, they laid their hands on the elected office-bearers, and in this form "commended

[1] 2 Cor. xi. 26,—*ποταμῶν*. [2] Acts xv. 38.

[3] Acts xv. 39. [4] Acts xiv. 6. [5] Acts xiv. 23.

[6] *Χειροτονήσαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς κατ' ἐκκλησίαν πρεσβυτέρους*.—The interpretation given in the text is sanctified by the highest authorities. See Rothe's Anfange der Christlichen Kirche," p. 150; Alford on Acts xiv. 23; Burton's "Lectures," i. 150; Baumgarten's "Acts of the Apostles," Acts xiv. 23; Litton's "Church of Christ," p. 595.

them to the Lord on whom they believed." Having thus planted the Gospel in many districts which had never before been trodden by the feet of a Christian missionary, they returned to Antioch in Syria to rehearse "all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles." [1]

Paul and Barnabas spent about six years in this first tour; [2] and, occasionally, when their ministrations were likely to exert a wide and permanent influence, remained long in particular localities. The account of their designation, and of their labors in Cyprus, Pamphylia, Lycaonia, and the surrounding regions, occupies two whole chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. The importance of their mission may be estimated from this lengthened notice. Christianity greatly extended its base of operations, and shook paganism in some of its strongholds. In every place which they visited, the apostles observed a uniform plan of procedure. In the first instance, they made their appeal to the seed of Abraham; as they were themselves learned Israelites, they were generally permitted, on their arrival in a town, to set forth the claims of Jesus of Nazareth in the synagogue; and not until the Jews had exhibited a spirit of unbelief, did they turn to the heathen population. In the end, by far the majority of their converts were reclaimed idolaters. "The Gentiles were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord, and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." [3] Astonished at the mighty miracles exhibited by the two missionaries, the pagans imagined that "the gods" had come down to them "in the likeness of men"; and at Lystra the priest of Jupiter "brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people"; [4] but the Jews looked on in sullen incredulity, and kept alive an active and implacable opposition. At Cyprus, the apostles had to contend against the craft of a Jewish conjuror; [5] at Antioch, "the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the

[1] Acts xiv. 27.

[2] They set out on the mission probably in A.D. 44, and returned to Antioch in A.D. 50. The Council of Jerusalem took place the year following.

[3] Acts xiii. 48. [4] Acts xiv. 13. [5] Acts xiii. 6–8.

city, and raised persecution" against them, "and expelled them out of their coasts";[1] at Iconium, the Jews again "stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren";[2] and at Lystra the same parties "persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead."[3] The trials through which he now passed made an indelible impression on the mind of the great apostle, and in the last of his epistles, written many years afterward, he refers to them as among the most formidable he encountered in his perilous career. Timothy, who at this time was a mere boy, witnessed some of these ebullitions of Jewish malignity, and marked with admiration the heroic spirit of the heralds of the Cross. Paul, when about to be decapitated by the sword of Nero, could, therefore, appeal to the evangelist, and could fearlessly declare that, twenty years before, when his life was often at stake, he had not quailed before the terrors of martyrdom. "Thou," says he, "hast fully known my long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at *Antioch*, at *Iconium*, at *Lystra*, what persecutions I endured; but out of them all the Lord delivered me."[4]

The hostile efforts of the Jews did not arrest the Gospel in its triumphant career. The truth prevailed mightily among the Gentiles, and the great influx of converts began to impart an entirely new aspect to the Christian community. At first the Church consisted exclusively of Israelites by birth, and all who entered it still continued to observe the institution of Moses. But the number of its Gentile adherents soon preponderated, and ere long the keeping of the typical law became the peculiarity of a minority of its members. Many of the converted Jews were by no means prepared for such an alternative. They prided themselves on their divinely-instituted worship; and, misled by the fallacy that whatever is appointed by God can never become obsolete, they conceived that the spread of Christianity must be connected with the extension

[1] Acts xiii. 50.
[2] Acts xiv. 2.
[3] Acts xiv. 19.
[4] 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11.

of their national ceremonies. They accordingly asserted that the commandment relative to the initiatory ordinance of Judaism was binding upon all admitted to Christian fellowship. "Certain men which came down from Judea" to Antioch, "taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye can not be saved."[1]

Paul was eminently qualified to deal with such errorists. He had once valued himself on his Pharisaic strictness, but when God revealed to him His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, he was taught to distinguish between a living faith and a dead formalism. He still maintained his social status, as one of the "chosen people," by the keeping of the law; but he knew that it merely prefigured the great redemption, and that its types and shadows must quickly disappear before the light of the Gospel. He saw, too, that the arguments urged for circumcision could also be employed in behalf of all the Levitical arrangements,[2] and that the tendency of the teaching of these "men which came down from Judea" was to encumber the disciples with the weight of a superannuated ritual. Nor was this all. The apostle felt that the spirit which animated these Judaizing zealots was a spirit of self-righteousness. When they "taught the brethren and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, *ye can not be saved*," they subverted the doctrine of justification by faith alone.[3] A sinner is saved as soon as he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ,[4] and he requires neither circumcision, nor any other ordinance, to complete his pardon. Baptism is, indeed, the sign by which believers solemnly declare their acceptance of the Gospel, and the seal by which God is graciously pleased to recognize them as heirs of the righteousness of faith; and yet even baptism is not essential to salvation, for the penitent thief, though unbaptized, was admitted into Paradise.[5] But circumcision is no part of Christianity at all; it does not so much as indicate that the individual who submits to it is a believer in Jesus. Faith

[1] Acts xv. 1.

[2] This inference was indeed admitted. See Acts xv. 5, 24.

[3] Gal. v. 2–4, vi. 13, 14.

[4] Acts xvi. 31; John iii. 36.

[5] Luke xxiii. 43.

in the Saviour is the only and the perfect way of justification. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him,"[1] for Christ will, without fail, conduct to glory all who commit themselves to His guidance and protection. Those who trust in Him can not but love Him, and those who love Him can not but delight to do His will; and as faith is the root of holiness and happiness, so unbelief is the fountain of sin and misery. But though the way of salvation by faith can only be spiritually discerned, many seek to make it palpable by connecting it with certain visible institutions. Faith looks to Jesus as the only way to heaven; superstition looks to some outward observance, such as baptism or circumcision (which is only a finger-post on the way), and confounds it with the way itself. Faith is satisfied with a very simple ritual; superstition wearies itself with the multiplicity of its minute observances. Faith holds communion with the Saviour in all His appointments, and rejoices in Him with joy unspeakable; superstition leans on forms and ceremonies, and is in bondage to these beggarly elements. No wonder then that the attempt to impose on the converted Gentiles the rites of both Christianity and Judaism encountered such resolute opposition. Paul and Barnabas at once withstood its abettors, and had "no small dissension and disputation with them."[2] It was felt, however, that a matter of such grave importance merited the consideration of the collective wisdom of the Church, and it was accordingly agreed to send these two brethren, "and certain other of them," "to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.[3]

It is not stated that the Judaizing teachers confined their interference to Antioch, and the subsequent narrative indicates that the deputation to Jerusalem acted on behalf of all the Churches in Syria and Cilicia.[4] The Christian societies scattered throughout Pamphylia, Lycaonia, and some other districts of Asia Minor, were not directly concerned in sending forward the commissioners; but as these communities had been collected and organized by Paul and Barnabas, they considered that they were represented by their founders, and they

[1] Ps. ii. 12. [2] Acts xv. 2. [3] Acts xv. 2. [4] Acts xv. 23, 24, 41.

at once acceded to the decision of the assembly which met in the Jewish metropolis.[1] That assembly approached more closely than any ecclesiastical convention ever since held, to the character of a general council. It is clear that its deliberations took place at the time of one of the great annual festivals; for, seven or eight years before, the apostles had commenced their travels as missionaries, and except at the season of the Passover or of Pentecost, the Syrian deputation could not have reckoned on finding them in the holy city. It is not said that the officials to be consulted belonged exclusively to Jerusalem.[2] They included the elders throughout Palestine who usually repaired to the capital to celebrate the national solemnities. This meeting, therefore, was constructed on a broader basis than what a superficial reading of the narrative might suggest. Among its members were the older apostles, as well as Barnabas and Paul, so that it contained the principal founders of the Jewish and Gentile Churches; there were also present the elders of Jerusalem, and deputies from Antioch, that is, the representatives of the two most extensive and influential Christian societies in existence; whilst commissioners from the Churches of Syria and Cilicia, and elders from various districts of the holy land, were likewise in attendance. The Universal Church was thus fairly represented in this memorable Synod.

[1] Acts xvi. 4.

[2] Paul and Barnabas, with the other deputies, were sent "to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders" (Acts xv. 2); "when they were come to Jerusalem they were received of the Church, even of the apostles and elders" (Acts xv. 4); and the decrees were ordained "of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem" (Acts xvi. 4); but not one of these statements necessarily implies that these rulers were exclusively elders *of the Church of Jerusalem*. I here venture to deviate a little from our authorized translation of Acts xv. 4. The word *church* seems in this place to mean—not the whole multitude of the disciples, but the apostles and elders. Paul and Barnabas, and their fellow-deputies, were "received *of the church even* (or, *that is* or *both*) of the apostles and elders." The visit seems to have been of a private nature. See Gal. ii. 2. It was expedient, under the circumstances, that there should be no public reception. That καὶ has occasionally the meaning here indicated we may see by a reference to Rom. xi. 33; Matt. xxi. 5, and other passages.

The meeting was held A.D. 51, and Paul, exactly fourteen years before,[1] had visited Jerusalem for the first time after his conversion.[2] So little was then known of his remarkable history, even in the chief city of Judea, that when he "essayed to join himself to the disciples, they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple";[3] but now his position was completely changed, and he was felt to be one of the most influential personages who took part in the proceedings of this important convention. Some have maintained that the whole multitude of believers in the Jewish capital deliberated and voted on the question in dispute, but there is certainly nothing in the statement of the evangelist to warrant such an inference. It is very evident that the disciples in the holy city were not prepared to approve *unanimously* of the decision which was actually adopted, for long afterward they were "all zealous of the law," [4] and they looked with extreme suspicion on Paul himself, because of the lax principles, in reference to its obligation, which he was understood to patronize.[5] When he arrived in Jerusalem on this mission he found there a party determined to insist on the circumcision of the converts from heathenism;[6] he complains of the opposition he now encountered from these "false brethren unawares brought in";[7] and, when he returned to Antioch, he was fol-

[1] It has been argued by Burton ("Lectures," vol. i., p. 122), that the first visit of Paul to Jerusalem after his conversion took place about the time of one of the great festivals, as he is said, on the occasion, to have "disputed against the Grecians" (Acts ix. 29), who were likely then to have been very numerous in the city. If he arrived now at the time of the same festival, the interval was precisely fourteen years.

[2] Gal. ii. 1. Some make these fourteen years to include the three years mentioned Gal. i. 18, but this interpretation does violence to the language of the apostle. The system of chronology here adopted requires no such forced expositions. Paul came to Jerusalem three years after his conversion, that is, in A.D. 37; and fourteen years after, that is, in A.D. 51, he was at this Synod.

[3] Acts ix. 26. [4] Acts xxi. 20. [5] Acts xxi. 21. [6] Acts xv. 5.

[7] Gal. ii. 4. It is here taken for granted that the visit to Jerusalem mentioned in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, is the same as that described in the fifteenth of Acts. Paul says that he went up "by revelation" (Gal. ii. 2),—a statement from which it appears that he was divinely instructed to adopt this method of settling the question.

lowed by emissaries from the same bigoted and persevering faction.[1] It is quite clear, then, that the finding of the meeting, mentioned in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, *did not please* all the members of the church of the metropolis. The apostle says expressly that he communicated "privately" on the subject with "them which were of reputation,"[2] and in the present state of feeling, especially in the headquarters of Judaism, Paul recoiled from the discussion of a question of such delicacy before a promiscuous congregation. The resolution now agreed upon, when subsequently mentioned, is set forth as the act, not of the whole body of the disciples, but of "the apostles and elders,"[3] and as they were the arbiters to whom the appeal was made, they were obviously the only parties competent to pronounce a deliverance.

Two or three expressions of doubtful import, which occur in connection with the history of the meeting, have induced some to infer that all the members of the Church of Jerusalem were consulted on this occasion. It is said that "all the *multitude* kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul";[4] that it "pleased the apostles and elders with the *whole church* to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch";[5] and, according to our current text, that the epistle intrusted to the care of these commissioners, proceeded from "the apostles and elders *and brethren*."[6] But "the whole church," and "all the multitude," merely signify *the whole assembly present*, and do not necessarily imply even a very numerous congregation.[7] Some at least of the "certain other" deputies[8] sent with Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, were, we may presume, disposed to doubt or dispute their views; as it is not probable that a distracted constituency consented to the appointment of commissioners, all of whom were already com-

[1] Gal. ii. 12. [2] Gal. ii. 2. [3] Acts xvi. 4, xxi. 25.

[4] Acts xv. 12. [5] Acts xv. 22. [6] Acts xv. 23.

[7] The expression here used—"the multitude" (τὸ πλῆθος)—is repeatedly applied in the New Testament to the Sanhedrim, a court consisting of not more than seventy-two members. See Luke xxii. 1; Acts xxiii. 7. There were probably more individuals present at this meeting.

[8] Acts xv. 2.

mitted to the same sentiments. When, therefore, the evangelist reports that the proposal made by James "pleased the apostles and elders *with the whole Church*," he thus designs to intimate that it met the universal approval of the meeting, including the deputies on both sides. There were prophets and others possessed of extraordinary endowments, in the early Church,[1] and, as some of these were connected with Jerusalem,[2] we can scarcely suppose that they were not permitted to be present in this deliberative assembly. If we adopt the received reading of the superscription of the circular letter,[3] the "brethren" who are there distinguished from "the apostles and elders," were, in all likelihood, these gifted members.[4] But according to the testimony of by far the best and most ancient manuscripts, the true reading of this encyclical epistle is, "The apostles *and elders, brethren*.[5] As the Syrian deputies were commissioned to consult, not the general body

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11.

[2] In Acts xi. 27, we read of "prophets" who came "from Jerusalem unto Antioch."

[3] Acts xv. 23. "The apostles, and elders, *and* brethren."

[4] The context may appear to be favorable to this interpretation, for the two deputies now chosen—"Judas surnamed Barnabas, and Silas"—who were "chief men among *the brethren*" (ver. 22), are likewise described as "*prophets* also themselves" (ver. 32). In Acts xviii. 27, "the brethren" appear to be distinguished from "the disciples."

[5] This reading, which is adopted by Mill in the Prolegomena to his New Testament, as well as by Lachmann, Neander, Alford, and Tregelles, is supported by the authority of the Codex Vaticanus, the Codex Alexandrinus, the Codex Ephræmi, and the Codex Bezæ. It is to be found in by far the most valuable cursive MS. yet known. It is confirmed also by the early testimony of Irenæus, and by the Latin of the Codex Bezæ, a version more ancient than the Vulgate, as well as by the Vulgate itself. It is likewise the original reading of the Codex Sinaiticus—the uncial MS. recently brought to light by Dr. Tischendorf, and, as it would appear, the most ancient and valuable in existence. Dr. Tischendorf informs me in a letter, dated Leipsic, 15th August, 1860, that in this MS. *a later hand* has inserted καὶ οἱ before ἀδελφοὶ. The reading given above may now, therefore, be considered as conclusively established. The reading in the *textus receptus* may be accounted for by the growth of the doctrine of apostolical succession; as, when the hierarchy was in its glory, transcribers could not understand how the apostles and elders could be fellow-presbyters.

of Christians at Jerusalem, but the apostles and elders, this reading, now recognized as genuine by the highest critical authorities, is sustained by the whole tenor of the narrative. The same parties who "came together to consider of this matter" also framed the decree. The apostles and elders, brethren, were the only individuals officially concerned in this important transaction.[1]

In this council the apostles acted, not as men oracularly pronouncing the will of the Eternal, but as ordinary church rulers, proceeding, after careful inquiry, to adopt the suggestions of an enlightened judgment. One passage of the Synodical epistle has been supposed to countenance a different conclusion, for those assembled "to consider of this matter" are represented as saying to the Syrian and Cilician Churches, "*It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us* to lay upon you no greater burden"[2] than the restrictions which are presently enumerated. But it is to be observed that this is the language of "the elders, brethren," as well as of the apostles, so that it was used by many who made no pretensions to inspiration; and it is apparent from the context that the council here merely reproduces an argument against the Judaizers which had been always felt to be irresistible. The Gentiles had received the Spirit "by the hearing of faith,"[3] and not by the ordinance of circumscision; and hence it was contended that the Holy Ghost himself had decided the question. Peter, therefore, says to the meeting held at Jerusalem, "God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, *giving them the Holy Ghost*, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now, therefore, *why tempt ye God*, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers, nor we, were able to bear?"[4] He had employed the same reasoning long before, in defence of the baptism of Cornelius and his friends. "The Ho'y Ghost," said he, "fell on them. . . . . Forasmuch, then,

[1] It is worthy of note that Peter, fourteen or fifteen years afterward, speaks in the style here indicated. Thus he says, "The elders which are among you, I exhort, *who am also an elder*" (συμπρεσβύτερος)—(1 Pet. v. 1.)

[2] Acts xv. 28. [3] Gal. iii. 2. [4] Acts xv. 8–10.

as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, *what was I that I could withstand God?*"[1] When, then, the members of the council here declared, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us,"[2] they thus simply intimated that they were shut up to the arrangement which they now announced—that God himself, by imparting His Spirit to those who had not received the rite of circumcision, had already settled the controversy—and that, as it had seemed good to the Holy Ghost not to impose the ceremonial law upon the Gentiles, so it also seemed good to "the apostles and elders, brethren."

But whilst the abundant outpouring of the Spirit on the Gentiles demonstrated that they were sanctified and saved without circumcision, and whilst the Most High had thus proclaimed their freedom from the yoke of the Jewish ritual, it is plain that, in regard to this point, as well as other matters noticed in the letter, the writers speak as the accredited *interpreters* of the will of Jehovah. They state that it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to them to require the converts from paganism "to abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication."[3] And yet, without any special revelation, they might have felt themselves warranted to give such instructions in such language, for surely they were at liberty to say that the Holy Ghost had interdicted fornication; and, as the expounders of the doctrine of Christian expediency,[4] their views may have been so clear that they could speak with equal confidence as to the duty of the disciples under present circumstances to abstain from blood, and from things strangled, and from meats offered to idols. If they possessed "the full assurance of understanding" as to the course to be pursued, they deemed it right to signify to their correspondents that the decision which they now promulgated was, not any arbitrary or hasty deliverance, but the very "mind of the Spirit"

[1] Acts xi. 15, 17.

[2] This style of speaking was used by councils in after-ages, and often in cases when it was singularly inappropriate.

[3] Acts xv. 29.

[4] See 1 Cor. x. 23, 31, 32.

either expressly communicated in the Word, or deduced from it by good and necessary inference. In this way they aimed to reach the conscience, and they knew that they thus furnished the most potential argument for submission.

It may at first sight appear strange that whilst the apostles, and those who acted with them at this meeting, condemned the doctrine of the Judaizers, and affirmed that circumcision was not obligatory on the Gentiles, they, at the same time, required the converts from paganism to observe a part of the Hebrew ritual; and it may seem quite as extraordinary that, in a letter which was the fruit of so much deliberation, they placed an immoral act, and a number of merely ceremonial usages, in the same catalogue. But, on reflection, we may recognize their tact and Christian prudence in these features of their communication. Fornication was one of the crying sins of Gentilism, and, except when it interfered with social arrangements, the heathen did not even acknowledge its criminality. When, therefore, the new converts were furnished with the welcome intelligence that they were not obliged to submit to the painful rite of circumcision, it was well, at the same time, to remind them that there were lusts of the flesh which they were bound to mortify; and it was expedient that, whilst a vice so prevalent as fornication should be specified, they should be distinctly warned to beware of its pollutions. For another reason they were directed to abstain from "meats offered to idols." It often happened that what had been presented at the shrine of a false god was afterward exposed for sale, and the council cautioned the disciples against partaking of such food, as they might thus appear to give a species of sanction to idolatry, as well as tempt weak brethren to go a step further, and directly countenance the superstitions of the heathen worship.[1] The meeting also instructed the faithful in Syria and Cilicia to abstain from "blood and from things strangled," because the Jewish converts had been ac-

[1] "Since the eating of such food, as Paul expressly teaches (1 Cor. x. 19, 33), was not sinful in itself, and yet to be avoided out of tenderness to those who thought it so, the abstinence here recommended must be understood in the same manner."—*Alexander on the Acts*, ii. 84.

customed from infancy to regard aliment of this description with abhorrence, and they could scarcely be expected to sit at meat with parties who partook of such dishes. Though the use of them might be lawful, it was, at least for the present, not expedient; and on the principle that, whether we eat, or drink, or whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of God, the Gentile converts were admonished to remove them from their tables, that no barrier might be raised against social or ecclesiastical communion with their brethren of the seed of Abraham.

It was high time for the authoritative settlement of a question at once so perplexing and so delicate. It already threatened to create a schism in the Church; and the agitation, which had commenced before the meeting of the council, was not immediately quieted. When Peter visited Antioch shortly afterward, he at first triumphed so far over his prejudices as to sit at meat with the converts from paganism; but when certain sticklers for the law arrived from Jerusalem, "he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision."[1] The "decree" of the apostles and elders undoubtedly implied the lawfulness of eating with the Gentiles, but it contained no express injunction on the subject, and Peter, who was now about to "go unto the circumcision,"[2] and who was, therefore, most anxious to conciliate the Jews, may have pleaded this technical objection in defence of his inconsistency. It is said that others, from whom better things might have been expected, followed his example, "insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation."[3] But, on this critical occasion, Paul stood firm; and his bold and energetic remonstrances appear to have had the effect of preventing a division which must have been most detrimental to the interests of infant Christianity.

[1] Gal. ii. 12. [2] Gal. ii. 9. [3] Gal. ii. 13.

CHAPTER VI.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE GOSPEL INTO EUROPE, AND THE MINISTRY OF PAUL AT PHILIPPI.

A.D. 52.

AFTER the Council of Jerusalem, the Gospel continued its prosperous career. When Paul had remained for some time at Antioch, where he returned with the deputation, he set out to visit the Churches of Syria and Cilicia; and then travelled through Lycaonia, Galatia, and some other portions of Asia Minor. He was now directed, by a vision,[1] to pass over into Greece; and about the spring of A.D. 52, or twenty-one years after the crucifixion, Europe was entered, for the first time, by the Apostle of the Gentiles. Paul commenced his ministry in this new sphere of labor by announcing the great salvation to the inhabitants of Philippi, a city of Macedonia, and a Roman colony.[2]

Nearly a century before, two powerful factions, contending for the government of the Roman world, had converted this district into a theatre of war; and two famous battles, which issued in the overthrow of the Republic, had been fought in the neighborhood. The victor had rewarded some of his veterans by giving them possessions at Philippi. The Christian missionary entered, as it were, the suburbs of the great metropolis of the West, when he made his appearance in this military colony; for, it had the same privileges as the towns of Italy,[3] and its inhabitants enjoyed the status of Roman

[1] Acts xvi. 9. [2] Acts xvi. 12.

[3] "The *Jus Italicum* raised provincial land to the same state of *immunity from taxation* which belonged to land in Italy."—*Conybeare and Howson*, i. 302, note.

citizens. Here he now originated a spiritual revolution which eventually changed the face of Europe. The Jews had no synagogue in Philippi; but, in places such as this, where their numbers were few, they were wont, on the Sabbath, to meet for worship by the side of some river in which they could conveniently perform their ablutions; and Paul accordingly repaired to the banks of the Gangitas,[1] where he expected to find them assembled for devotional exercises. A small oratory, or house of prayer, seems to have been erected on the spot; but the little society connected with it must have been particularly apathetic, as the apostle found only a few females in attendance. One of these was, however, the first-fruits of his mission to the Western continent. Lydia, a native of Thyatira, and a seller of purple,—a species of dye for which her birthplace had acquired celebrity,—was the name of the convert; and though the Gospel may already have made some progress in Rome, yet so far as direct historical testimony is concerned, this woman has the best claim to be recognized as the mother of European Christianity. It is said that she "worshipped God,"[2] that is, though a Gentile, she had been proselyted to the Jewish faith; and the history of her conversion is given by the evangelist with remarkable clearness and simplicity. "The Lord *opened her heart* that she attended unto the things that were spoken of Paul."[3] When she and her family were baptized, she entreated the missionaries to "come into her house and abide there" during their sojourn in the place; and, after some hesitation, they accepted the proffered hospitality.

Another female acts a conspicuous part in connection with this apostolic visit. "It came to pass," says Luke, "as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: the same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days."[4] Dæmons may have the power of discerning

[1] Not the Strymon. See Conybeare and Howson, i. 316.

[2] Acts xvi. 14. [3] Acts xvi. 14. [4] Acts xvi.16–18.

certain classes of future events with the quickness of intuition;[1] and if, as the Scriptures testify, they have sometimes entered into human bodies, we can well understand how the individuals thus possessed have obtained credit for divination. In this way the damsel mentioned by the evangelist may have acquired her celebrity. We can not explain how disembodied spirits maintain intercourse; but it is certain that they possess means of mutual recognition, and that they can be impressed by the presence of higher and holier intelligences. And as the approach of a mighty conqueror spreads dismay throughout the territory he invades, so when the Son of God appeared on earth, the devils were troubled at His presence, and, in the agony of their terror, proclaimed His dignity.[2] Some influence of an analogous character operated on this Pythoness. The arrival of the missionaries in Philippi alarmed the powers of darkness, and the damsel, under the pressure of an impulse which she found it impossible to resist, told their commission. But neither the apostles, nor our Lord, cared for credentials of such equivocal value. As this female followed the strangers through the streets, and in a loud voice announced their errand to the city, "Paul being grieved, turned and said to the Spirit, I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her, and he came out the same hour."[3]

The unbelieving Jews had hitherto been the great persecutors of the Church; but now, for the first time, the apostles encountered opposition from another quarter; and the expulsion of the spirit from the damsel evoked the hostility of this new adversary. When the masters of the Pythoness "saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the market-place unto the rulers."[4] We here discover one great cause of the sufferings afterward

[1] They may have perceptive powers of which we can form no conception, and may thus discern the approach of particular events as distinctly as we can now calculate the ebb and flow of the tides, or the eclipses of the sun and moon.

[2] Matt. viii. 28, 29; Mark i. 24, 25; Luke iv. 34, 35.

[3] Acts xvi. 18. [4] Acts xvi. 19.

endured by the disciples of our Lord under the government of the pagan emperors. The Jews were prompted by mere bigotry to display hatred to the Gospel, but the Gentiles were generally guided by the still more ignoble principle of selfishness. Many of the heathen multitude cared little for their idolatrous worship; but all who depended for subsistence on the prevalence of superstition, such as the image-makers, the jugglers, the fortune-tellers, and a considerable number of the priests,[1] were dismayed and driven to desperation by the progress of Christianity. They saw that, with its success, "the hope of their gains was gone"; and, under pretence of zeal for the public interest, and for the maintenance of the "lawful" ceremonies, they labored to intimidate and oppress the adherents of the new doctrine.

The appearance of the missionaries at Philippi must have created a profound sensation, as otherwise it is impossible to account for the tumult which occurred. The "masters" of the damsel possessed of the "spirit of divination," no doubt, took the initiatory step in the movement; but had not the public mind been in some degree prepared for their appeals, they could not have induced all classes of their fellow-citizens so soon to join in the persecution. "The multitude rose up together" at their call; the duumviri, or magistrates, rent off the clothes of the apostles with their own hands, and commanded them to be scourged; the lictors "laid many stripes upon them"; they were ordered to be kept in close confinement; and the jailer exceeded the exact letter of his instructions by thrusting them "into the inner prison," and by making "their feet fast in the stocks."[2] The power of Imperial Rome arrayed itself against the preachers of the Gospel, and distinctly gave note of warning of the approach of that long night of affliction throughout which the Church was yet to struggle.

If the proceedings of the missionaries, before their commit-

[1] In some parts of the empire magistrates and men of rank acted gratuitously, but a large portion of the priests subsisted on the emoluments of office.

[2] Acts xvi. 24.

tal to prison, produced a ferment, it is clear that the circumstances attending their incarceration were not calculated to abate the excitement. It soon appeared that they had sources of enjoyment which no human authority could either destroy or disturb; for as they lay in the pitchy darkness of their dungeon with their feet compressed in the stocks, their hearts overflowed with divine comfort. "At midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and *sang praises unto God:* and the prisoners heard them."[1] What was the wonder of the other inmates of the jail, as these sounds fell upon their ears! Instead of a cry of distress issuing from "the inner prison," there was the cheerful voice of thanksgiving! The apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer in the service of Christ. The King of the Church sympathized with His oppressed saints, and speedily vouchsafed to them most wonderful tokens of encouragement. Scarcely had they finished their song of praise when it was answered by a very significant response, proclaiming that they were supported by a power which could crush the might of Rome. "Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed."[2]

It is not improbable that the mind of the jailer had already been ill at ease. He must have heard of the extraordinary history of the damsel with the spirit of divination who announced that his prisoners were the servants of the Most High God, and that they showed unto men the way of salvation. Rumor had supplied him with some information in reference to their doctrines; and during even his short intercourse with Paul and Silas in the jail, he may have been impressed by much that he noticed in their spirit and deportment. But he had meanwhile gone to rest, and he remained asleep until roused by the noise and tremor of the earthquake. When he awoke and saw "the prison doors open," he was in a paroxysm of alarm; and concluding that the prisoners had escaped, and that he might expect to be punished capitally for neglect of duty, he resolved to anticipate such a fate, and snatched his

[1] Acts xvi. 25. [2] Acts xvi. 26.

sword to commit suicide. At this moment, a voice issuing from the dungeon where the missionaries were confined, dispelled his fears as to the prisoners, and arrested him almost in the very act of self-murder. "Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm, for we are all here."[1] These words instantaneously directed the thoughts of the unhappy man into another channel, and awakened feelings which had hitherto been comparatively dormant. The conviction flashed upon his conscience that the strangers whom he had so recently thrust into the inner prison were no impostors; that they had, as they alleged, authority to treat of matters infinitely more important than any of the passing interests of time; that they had, verily, a commission from Heaven to teach the way of eternal salvation; and that he and others, who had taken part in their imprisonment, had acted most iniquitously. For what could be more evident than that the apostles were the servants of the Most High God? When everything around them was enveloped in the gloom of midnight, they were able to tell what was passing all over the prison. How strange that, when the jailer was about to kill himself, a voice should issue from a different apartment, saying, "Do thyself no harm!" How strange that the very man whose feet, a few hours before, had been made fast in the stocks, should be the giver of this friendly counsel! And how extraordinary that, during the very first night of his imprisonment, the bands of all the inmates were loosed, and that the building was made to rock to its foundations! Did not the earthquake indicate that He, whom the apostles served, was able to save and to destroy? When the jailer thought on these things, well might he be paralyzed with fear, and believing that the apostles alone could tell him how to obtain relief from the anxiety which oppressed his spirit, no wonder that "he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling,

[1] Acts xvi. 28. "By a singular historical coincidence, this very city of Philippi, or its neighborhood, had been signalized within a hundred years, not only by the great defeat of Brutus and Cassius, but by the suicide of both, and by a sort of wholesale self-destruction on the part of their adherents."—*Alexander on the Acts*, ii. 122, 123.

and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"[1]

The missionaries were prepared with a decisive reply to this earnest inquiry, and no doubt their answer took the jailer by surprise. He expected to be called upon to *do* something, either to propitiate the apostles themselves, or to turn away the wrath of the God of the apostles. It is obvious, from the spirit which he manifested, that, to obtain peace of conscience, he was ready to go very far in the way of self-sacrifice—to part with his property, or to imperil his life, or, perhaps, to give "the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul." What, then, was his astonishment when he found that the divine mercy so far transcended anything he could have possibly anticipated! With what satisfaction did he listen to the assurance that an atonement had already been made, and that the sinner is safe as soon as he lays the hand of faith on the head of the great Sacrifice! What was his delight when informed that unbelief alone could shut him out from heaven; that the Son of God had died, the just for the unjust; and that this almighty Saviour waited to be gracious to—himself! How must the words of the apostles have thrilled through his soul, as he heard them repeating the invitation, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."[2]

The jailer joyfully accepted the proffered Deliverer; and felt that, resting on this Rock of Salvation, he had peace. Though well aware that, by openly embracing the Gospel, he exposed himself to considerable danger, he did not shrink from the position of a confessor. The love of Christ had obtained full possession of his soul, and he was quite prepared to suffer in the service of his Divine Master. He took Paul and Silas "the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his, straightway; and when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house."[3]

It is highly probable that the shock of the earthquake was felt beyond the precincts of the jail, and that the events which

[1] Acts xvi. 29, 30. [2] Acts xvi. 31. [3] Acts xvi. 33, 34.

had occurred there had soon been communicated to the city authorities. We can thus best account for the fact that "when it was day, the magistrates sent the sergeants, saying, Let those men go." [1] As it is not stated that the apostles had previously entered into any vindication of their conduct, it has been thought singular that they declined to leave the prison without receiving an apology for the violation of their privileges as Roman citizens. But this matter presents no real difficulty. The magistrates had yielded to the clamor of an infuriated mob; and, instead of giving Paul and Silas a fair opportunity of defence or explanation, had summarily consigned them to the custody of the jailer. These functionaries were now prepared to listen to remonstrance; and Paul deemed it due to himself, and to the interests of the Christian Church, to complain of the illegal character of the proceedings from which he had suffered. He had been punished, without a trial; and scourged, though a Roman citizen.[2] Hence, when informed that the duumviri had given orders for the liberation of himself and his companion, the apostle exclaimed: "They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison, and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily, but let them come themselves, and fetch us out." [3] These words, which were immediately reported by the sergeants, or lictors, inspired the magistrates with apprehension, and suggested to them the expediency of conciliation. "And they came" to the prison to the apostles, "and *besought them*, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city." [4] The missionaries did not, however, leave Philippi until they had another opportunity of meeting with their converts. "They went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia, and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed." [5]

[1] Acts xvi. 35.

[2] Paul says that he was "free born" (Acts xxii. 28). It was unlawful to scourge a Roman citizen, or even, except in extraordinary cases, to imprison him without trial. He had also the privilege of appeal to the Emperor.

[3] Acts xvi. 37. [4] Acts xvi. 39. [5] Acts xvi. 40.

On the whole, Paul and Silas had reason to thank God and take courage, when they reviewed their progress in the first European city which they visited. Though they had met with much opposition, their ministry had been greatly blessed; and, in the end, the magistrates, who had treated them with such severity, had felt it necessary to apologize. The extraordinary circumstances accompanying their imprisonment had made their case known to the whole body of the citizens, and secured a degree of attention to their preaching which could not have been otherwise expected. The Church, now established at Philippi, contained a number of most generous members, and Paul afterward gratefully acknowledged the assistance he received from them. "Ye have well done," said he, "that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now, ye Philippians, know also, that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For, even in Thessalonica, ye sent once and again unto my necessity." [1]

[1] Phil. iv. 14–16.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MINISTRY OF PAUL IN THESSALONICA, BEREA, ATHENS, AND CORINTH.

A.D. 52 TO A.D. 54.

AFTER leaving Philippi, and passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, Paul made his way to Thessalonica. In this city there was a Jewish synagogue where he was permitted, for three successive Sabbaths, to address the congregation. His discourses produced a powerful impression; as some of the seed of Abraham believed, "and, of the devout Greeks, a great multitude, and of the chief women, not a few."[1] The unbelieving Jews attempted to create annoyance by representing the missionaries as acting "contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying, that there is another king, one Jesus";[2] but though they contrived to trouble "the rulers"[3] and to "set all the city in an uproar," they did not succeed in preventing the formation of a flourishing Christian community. Paul appeared next in Berea, and, when reporting his success here, the sacred historian bears a remarkable testimony to the right of the laity

[1] Acts xvii. 4.

[2] Acts xvii. 7.

[3] Acts xvii. 8, ἐτάραξαν—τοὺς πολιτάρχας. The name here given to the magistrates (*politarchs*), does not occur in ancient literature; but a Greek inscription, on an arch still to be seen at this place, demonstrates the accuracy of the sacred historian. This arch supplies evidence that it was erected about the time when the Republic was passing into the Empire, and that it was in existence when Paul preached there. It appears from it that the magistrates of Thessalonica were called politarchs, and that they were seven in number. What is almost equally striking is that three of the names in the inscription are *Sopater*, *Gaius*, and *Secundus*, the same as those of three of Paul's friends in this district. Conybeare and Howson, i. 360.

to judge for themselves as to the meaning of the Book of Inspiration; for he states that the Jews of this place "were *more noble* than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and *searched the Scriptures daily*"[1] to ascertain the truth of the apostolic doctrine. Paul was now "sent to go as it were to the sea," and soon afterward arrived at Athens.

The ancient capital of Attica had long been the literary metropolis of heathendom. Its citizens could boast that they were sprung from a race of heroes; as their forefathers had nobly struggled for freedom on many a bloody battle-field, and, by prodigies of valor, had maintained their independence against all the might of Persia. Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, was their tutelary deity. The Athenians, from time immemorial, had been noted for their intellectual elevation; and a brilliant array of poets, legislators, historians, philosophers, and orators had crowned their community with immortal fame. Every spot connected with their city was classic ground. Here it was that Socrates had discoursed so sagely; that Plato had illustrated, with so much felicity and genius, the precepts of his great master; and that Demosthenes, by addresses of unrivalled eloquence, had roused and agitated the assemblies of his countrymen. As the stranger passed through Athens, artistic productions of superior excellence everywhere met his eye. Its statues, its public monuments, and its temples were models alike of tasteful design and of beautiful workmanship. But there may be much intellectual culture where there is no spiritual enlightenment, and Athens, though so far advanced in civilization and refinement, was one of the high places of pagan superstition. Amidst the splendor of its architectural decorations, as well as surrounded with proofs of its scientific and literary eminence, the apostle mourned over its religious destitution, and "his spirit was stirred in him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry."[2]

On this new scene Paul exhibited his usual activity and earnestness. "He disputed in the synagogue with the Jews,

[1] Acts xvii. 11.

[2] Acts xvii. 16.

and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him."[1] The Christian preacher soon became an object of no little curiosity. He was of diminutive stature;[2] he labored under the disadvantages of imperfect vision;[3] and his Palestinian Greek sounded harshly in the ears of those who were accustomed to speak their mother tongue in its Attic purity. But, though his "bodily presence was weak,"[4] he speedily convinced those who came in contact with him, that the frail earthly tabernacle was the habitation of a master mind; and though mere connoisseurs in idioms and pronunciation might designate "his speech contemptible,"[5] he riveted the attention of his hearers by the force and impressiveness of his oratory. The presence of this extraordinary stranger did not remain long unknown to the Athenian literati; but, when they entered into conversation with him, some of them attempted to ridicule him as an idle talker, whilst others were inclined to denounce him as a dangerous innovator. "Certain philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics encountered him; and some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection."[6] Upwards of four hundred years before, Socrates had been condemned to death by the Athenians as "a setter forth of strange gods,"[7] and perhaps some of these philosophers hoped to intimidate the apostle by hinting that he was open to the same indictment. But they could not have seriously contemplated a prosecution, as they had themselves no faith in the pagan mythology. They were quite ready to employ their wit to turn the heathen worship into scorn; and yet they were unable to point out a "more excellent way" of religious service. In Athens, philosophy had demonstrated its utter impotence to do anything effective for the reformation

[1] Acts xvii. 17. [2] See Conybeare and Howson, i. 241.

[3] See Alford on Acts xiii. 9, and xxiii. 1. In a recent publication—Dr. Brown's *Horæ Subsecivæ*, p. 101—the reader will find some exceedingly ingenious observations on this subject.

[4] 2 Cor. x. 10. [5] 2 Cor. x. 10. [6] Acts xvii. 18.

[7] Ἀδικεῖ Σωκράτης——ἕτερα δὲ καινὰ δαιμόνια εἰσφέρων.—*Xen. Mem.* i. 1.

of the popular theology; and its professors had settled down into the conviction that, as the current superstition exercised an immense influence over the minds of the multitude, it was inexpedient for wise men to withhold from it the tribute of outward reverence. The discourses of Paul were very far from complimentary to parties who valued themselves so highly on their intellectual advancement; for he quietly ignored all their speculations as so much folly; and, whilst he propounded his own system with the utmost confidence, he supported it by arguments which they were determined to reject, but unable to overturn. It is clear that they were to some extent under the influence of pique and irritation when they noticed his deviations from the established faith, and applied to him the epithet of "babbler"; but Paul was not the man to be put down either by irony or insult; and at length it was found necessary to allow him a fair opportunity of explaining his principles. It is accordingly stated that "they took him and brought him unto Mars' Hill, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is, for thou bringest certain strange things to our ears? we would know, therefore, what these things mean."[1]

The speech delivered by Paul on this memorable occasion has been often admired for its tact, vigor, depth, and fidelity. Whilst giving the Athenians full credit for their devotional feeling, and avoiding any pointed and sarcastic attack on the absurdities of their religious ritual, he contrives to present such an outline of the prominent features of the Christian revelation, as must have convinced any candid and intelligent auditor of its incomparable superiority, as well to the doctrines of the philosophers as to the fables of heathenism. In the very commencement of his observations he displays no little address. "Ye men of Athens," said he, "I perceive that in every point of view ye are carrying your religious reverence very far; for, as I passed by and observed the objects of your worship, I found an altar with this inscription: To the unknown God—whom, therefore, ye worship, though ye know

[1] Acts xvii. 19, 20. It is very evident that he was not arraigned before the court of Areopagus, as our English translation indicates.

him not, him declare I unto you."[1] The existence in this city of inscriptions, such as that here given, is attested by several other ancient witnesses[2] as well as Paul; and the altars thus distinguished were erected when the place was afflicted by certain strange and unprecedented calamities which the deities, already recognized, were admitted to be unable to remove. The auditors of the apostle could not well be dissatisfied with the statement that they carried their "religious reverence very far," and yet they were scarcely prepared for the reference to this altar by which the observation was illustrated; for the inscription which he quoted contained a most humiliating confession of their ignorance, and furnished him with an excellent apology for proposing to act as their theological instructor.

His discourse, which treats of the Being and Attributes of God, was well fitted to win the attention of the polite and intelligent Athenians. Its reasoning is plain, pertinent, and powerful; and, whilst adopting a didactic tone and avoiding the language and spirit of controversy, the apostle in every sentence comes into direct collision either with the errors of polytheism or the dogmas of the Grecian philosophy. The Stoics were Pantheists and held the doctrine of the eternity of matter;[3] the Epicureans maintained that the universe arose out of a fortuitous concurrence of atoms;[4] and, therefore, Paul announced his opposition to both these sects when he declared that "God made the world and all things therein."[5] The Athenians boasted that they were of nobler descent than the rest of their countrymen;[6] and the heathen generally be-

[1] Acts xvii. 22, 23. This translation obviously conveys the meaning of the original more distinctly than our English version. See Alford, ii. 178; and Conybeare and Howson, i. 406.

[2] It is a curious fact that the impostor Apollonius, of Tyana, who was the contemporary of the apostle, speaks of Athens as a place "where altars are raised *to the unknown Gods*." "Life," by Philostratus, book vi., c. 3. See also Pausanias, Attic. i. 4.

[3] See Cudworth's "Intellectual System," with Notes by Mosheim, i. 513, 111. Edition, London, 1845.

[4] See Mosheim's "Commentaries on the Affairs of the Christians before Constantine," by Vidal, i. 42.

[5] Acts xvii. 24.

[6] See Alford on Acts xvii. 26.

lieved that each nation belonged to a distinct stock and was under the guardianship of its own peculiar deities; but the apostle affirmed that "God hath made *of one blood* all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth."[1] The Epicureans asserted that the gods did not interfere in the concerns of the human family, and that they were destitute of foreknowledge; but Paul here assured them that the great Creator "giveth to all life and breath and all things," and "hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation."[2] The heathen imagined that the gods inhabited their images; but, whilst Paul was ready to acknowledge the excellence as works of art of the statues which he saw all around him, he distinctly intimated that these dead pieces of material mechanism could never even faintly represent the glory of the invisible First Cause, and that they were unworthy the homage of living and intellectual beings. "As we are the offspring of God," said he, "we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art and man's device."[3] After having thus borne testimony to the spirituality of the I AM THAT I AM, and asserted His authority as the Maker and Preserver of the world, Paul proceeded to point out His claims as its righteous Governor. "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead."[4]

The pleasure-loving Epicureans refused to believe in a future state of rewards and punishments, and concurred with the Stoics in denying the immortality of the soul.[5] Both these parties were prepared to reject the doctrine of a general judgment. The idea of the resurrection of the body was quite novel to almost all classes of the Gentiles; and, when at first propounded to the Athenians, was received by many with doubt and by some with ridicule. "When they heard of the

[1] Acts xvii. 26.
[2] Acts xvii. 25, 26.
[3] Acts xvii. 29.
[4] Acts xvii. 31.
[5] Cudworth, with Notes by Mosheim, ii. 120, and Mosheim's "Commentaries," by Vidal, i. 42.

resurrection of the dead, some mocked and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them."[1]

The frivolous spirit cherished by the citizens of the ancient capital of Attica was exceedingly unfavorable to the progress of the earnest faith of Christianity. "All the Athenians, and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing."[2] Though they had acquired a world-wide reputation for literary culture, their city continued for several centuries afterward to be one of the strongholds of Gentile superstition. But the labors of Paul were not entirely unproductive. "Certain men clave unto him and believed, among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them."[3] The court of Areopagus, long the highest judicial tribunal in the place, had not even yet entirely lost its celebrity; and the circumstance that Dionysius was connected with it is a proof that this Christian convert was a respectable and influential citizen. He occupied a very high place among the primitive disciples, and the number of spurious writings ascribed to him[4] show that his name was deemed a tower of strength to the cause with which it was associated. He was long at the head of the Athenian presbytery, and survived his conversion forty years, or till the time of the Domitian persecution.[5]

From Athens Paul directed his steps to Corinth, where he arrived in the autumn of A.D. 52. Nearly two hundred years before, this city had been completely destroyed; but after a century of desolation it had been rebuilt; and, having since rapidly increased, it was now flourishing and populous. As a place of trade, its position near an isthmus of the same name gave it immense advantages; for it had a harbor on each side, so that it was the central depot of the commerce of the East and West. Its inhabitants valued themselves much on their

[1] Acts xvii. 32. [2] Acts xvii. 21. [3] Acts xvii. 34.

[4] These writings, which made their appearance not earlier than the fourth or fifth century, were held in great reputation, particularly by the Mystics, in the Middle Ages.

[5] Burton's "Lectures," i. 183.

attainments in philosophy and general literature; but, whilst by traffic they had succeeded in acquiring wealth, they had given way to the temptations of luxury and licentiousness. Corinth was at this time one of the most dissolute cities of the Empire. It was the capital of the large province of Achaia, and the residence of the Roman proconsul.

Paul, when at Athens, adapted his style of instruction to the character of his auditors, and was thus obliged to occupy much of his time in discussing the principles of natural religion. He endeavored to gain over the citizens by showing them that their views of the Godhead could not stand the test of a vigorous and discriminating logic, and that Christianity alone rested on a sound philosophical foundation. But the exposition of a pure system of theism had comparatively little influence on the hearts and consciences of these system-builders. Considering the time and skill devoted to its culture, Athens had yielded less spiritual fruit than any field of labor on which he had yet operated. When he arrived in Corinth, he resolved, therefore, to avoid, as much as possible, mere metaphysical argumentation, and sought rather to stir up sinners to flee from the wrath to come, by pressing home upon them earnestly the peculiar doctrines of revelation. In the first epistle, addressed subsequently to the Church established in this place, he thus describes the spirit in which he conducted his apostolical ministrations. "And I, brethren," says he, "when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God, for I determined not to know anything among you save *Jesus Christ and him crucified;* and my speech and my preaching was, not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."[1]

The result demonstrated that the apostle thus pursued the most effective mode of advancing the Christian cause. It might, indeed, have been thought that Corinth was a very ungenial soil for the Gospel, as Venus was the favorite deity

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 1, 2, 4, 5.

of the place; and a thousand priestesses, or, in other words, a thousand prostitutes, were employed in the celebration of her orgies.[1] The inhabitants generally were sunk in the very depths of moral pollution. But the preaching of the Cross produced a powerful impression even in this hotbed of iniquity. Notwithstanding the enmity of the Jews, who "opposed themselves and blasphemed,"[2] Paul succeeded in collecting here a large and prosperous congregation. "Many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."[3] Most of the converts were in very humble circumstances, and hence the apostle says to them in his first epistle, "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called";[4] but still a few persons of distinction united themselves to the despised community. Erastus, the chamberlain, or treasurer, of the city, was among the disciples.[5] This civic functionary may have joined the Church at a later date; but, even now, Paul was encouraged by the accession of some remarkable converts. Of these the most conspicuous was Crispus, "the chief ruler of the synagogue," who, "with all his house," submitted to baptism.[6] About the same time Gaius, an opulent citizen, who rendered good service to the common cause by his Christian hospitality,[7] openly embraced the Gospel. Two other converts, who are often honorably mentioned in the New Testament, were now likewise added to the infant Church. These were Aquila and Priscilla.[8] Some have, indeed, maintained that this couple had been already baptized; but, on the arrival of Paul in Corinth, Aquila is represented as *a Jew*[9]—a designation not descriptive of his position had he been previously a believer—and therefore the conversion of himself and his excellent partner must have occurred at this period.

[1] Strabo, lib. viii. vol. i., p. 549; Edit. Oxon. 1807.
[2] Acts xviii. 6. [3] Acts xviii. 8. [4] 1 Cor. i. 26.
[5] Rom. xvi. 23. This epistle was written from Corinth.
[6] Acts xviii. 8. [7] 1 Cor. i. 14; Rom. xvi. 23.
[8] Acts xviii. 2, 26; Rom. xvi. 3; 1 Cor. xvi. 19; 2 Tim. iv. 19.
[9] Acts xviii. 2.

In this city, as well as in many other places, the apostle supported himself by the labor of his own hands. It was customary, even for Israelites in easy circumstances, to train up their children to some mechanical employment, so that should they sink into penury, they could still, by manual industry, procure a livelihood.[1] Paul had been taught the trade of a tent-maker, or manufacturer of awnings of haircloth—articles much used in the East as a protection against the rays of the sun, by travellers and mariners. It was in connection with this occupation that he became acquainted with Aquila and Priscilla. "Because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought."[2] The Jew and his wife had probably a large manufactory, and thus could furnish the apostle with remunerative employment. When under their roof, he did not neglect the opportunities he enjoyed of presenting the Gospel to their attention, and both soon became his ardent and energetic coadjutors in missionary service.

The conduct of Paul in working with his own hands, when engaged in the dissemination of the Gospel, is a noble example of Christian self-denial. He could, it appears, expect little assistance from the mother church of Antioch; and had he, in the first instance, demanded support from those to whom he ministered, he exposed himself and his cause to the utmost suspicion. In a commercial city, such as Corinth, he would have been regarded by many as a mere adventurer who had resorted to a new species of speculation in the hope of obtaining a maintenance. His disinterested behavior placed him at once beyond the reach of this imputation; and his intense love to Christ prepared him to make the sacrifice, which the course he thus adopted required. And what a proof of the humility of Paul that he cheerfully labored for his daily bread at the trade of a tent-maker! The Rabbi once admired for his genius and his learning by the most distinguished of

[1] "Rabbi Judah saith, 'He that teacheth not his son a trade, doth the same as if he taught him to be a thief'; and Rabban Gamaliel saith, 'He that hath a trade in his hand, to what is he like? He is like a vineyard that is fenced.'"—See *Alford on Acts*, xviii. 3.

[2] Acts xviii. 3.

his countrymen—who had sat among the members of the great Sanhedrim—and who might have legitimately aspired to be the son-in-law of the High-Priest of Israel[1]—was now content to toil "night and day" at a menial occupation, sitting among the workmen of Aquila and Priscilla! How like to Him who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we, through His poverty, might be rich!

Paul was well aware of the importance of Corinth as a centre of missionary influence. Strangers from the East passed through it on their way to Rome, and travellers from the Western metropolis stopped here on their way to Asia Minor, Palestine, or Syria, so that it was one of the greatest thoroughfares in the Empire; and, as a commercial mart, it was second to very few cities in the world. The apostle therefore saw that if a Church could be firmly planted in this busy capital, it would scatter the seeds of truth to all the ends of the earth. We may thus understand why he remained in Corinth so much longer than in any other place he had yet visited since his departure from Antioch. "He continued there a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them."[2] He was encouraged by a special communication from Heaven to prosecute his labors with zeal and diligence. "The Lord spake to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city."[3]

Though the ministry of the apostle was attended with such remarkable success, his converts did not all continue to walk worthy of their profession. But if in the Church of this flourishing mercantile metropolis there were greater disorders than in perhaps any other of the early Christian communities,[4] the explanation is obvious. Even in a degenerate age Corinth was notorious for its profligacy; and it would have been indeed marvellous if excesses had not been occasionally committed by some of the members of a religious soci-

[1] Epiphanius, "Haer," xxx. 16. [2] Acts xviii. 11. [3] Acts xviii 9, 10

[4] See 1 Cor. i. 11, and xi. 20, 21; and 2 Cor. xii. 21; and xiii. 2.

ety composed, to a considerable extent, of reclaimed libertines.[1]

The success of the Gospel in Corinth roused the unbelieving Jews to opposition; and here, as elsewhere, they endeavored to avail themselves of the aid of the civil power; but in this instance, their appeal to the Roman magistrate was signally unsuccessful. Gallio, brother of the celebrated Seneca, the philosopher, was "the deputy of Achaia";[2] and when the bigoted and incensed Israelites "made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment-seat, saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God *contrary to the law*,"[3] the proconsul turned a deaf ear to the accusation. When the apostle was about to enter on his defence, Gallio intimated that such a proceeding was quite unnecessary, as the affair did not come within the range of his jurisdiction. "If," said he, "it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you; but if it be a question of words and names and of *your law*, look ye to it, for I will be no judge of such matters. And he drave them from the judgment-seat."[4] On this occasion, for the first time since the arrival of Paul and his brethren in Europe, the mob was on the side of the missionaries, and under the very eye of the proconsul, and without any effort on his part to interfere and arrest their violence, the most prominent of the plaintiffs was somewhat roughly handled. "Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-seat. And Gallio cared for none of these things."[5]

When Paul was at Corinth, and probably in A.D. 53, he wrote his two earliest letters; that is, the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians. These communications were, therefore, drawn up about twelve months after the original formation of the religious community to which they are addressed. The Thessalonian Church was already fully organized, as the apostle here points out to the disciples their duties to those who

[1] See 1 Cor. vi. 9–11. [2] Acts xviii. 12. [3] Acts xviii. 13.
[4] Acts xviii. 14–16. [5] Acts xviii. 17.

labored among them and who were over them in the Lord.[1] Several errors had gained currency; and a letter, announcing that the day of Christ was at hand, and purporting to have been penned by Paul himself, had thrown the brethren into great consternation.[2] The apostle accordingly deemed it necessary to interpose, and to point out the dangerous character of the doctrines which had been so industriously promulgated. He now, too, delivered his famous prophecy announcing the revelation of the "Man of Sin" before the second coming of the Redeemer.[3] Almost all the members of the Thessalonian Church were converted Gentiles,[4] who were still but little acquainted with the Jewish Scriptures; and this is, perhaps, the reason why there is no quotation from the Old Testament in either of these letters. Even the Gospels were not yet written, and hence Paul exhorts the brethren "to hold fast the traditions," or rather "ordinances," [5] which they had been taught, "whether by word or his epistle." [6]

[1] 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. [2] 2 Thess. ii. 2. [3] 2 Thess. ii. 3–12.
[4] 1 Thess. i. 9. [5] Τὰς *παραδόσεις*.
[6] 2 Thess. ii. 15. Paul is here speaking, not of what had been handed down from preceding generations, but of what had been established by his own apostolic authority, so that the rendering "traditions" in our English version is a peculiarly unhappy translation.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CONVERSION OF APOLLOS, HIS CHARACTER, AND THE MINISTRY OF PAUL IN EPHESUS.

A.D. 54 TO A.D. 57.

THE apostle "took his leave"[1] of the Corinthian brethren in the spring of A.D. 54, and embarking at the port of Cenchrea, about eight or nine miles distant, set sail for Ephesus. The navigation among the islands of the Archipelago was somewhat intricate; and the voyage not unfrequently occupied from ten to fifteen days.[2] At Ephesus Paul "entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews."[3] His statements produced a favorable impression, and he was solicited to prolong his visit; but as he was on his way to Jerusalem, and anxious to be present at the approaching feast of Pentecost, he could only assure them of his intention to return, and then bid them farewell. He left behind him, however, in this great city his two Corinthian converts, Aquila and Priscilla, who carried on with industry and success the work which he had commenced so auspiciously. Among the first-fruits of their pious care for the spread of Christianity was the famous Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew, who now arrived in the metropolis of the Proconsular Asia.

The seed of Abraham in the birthplace of Apollos spoke the Greek language, and occupied a peculiar position. They were free from some of the prejudices of the Jews in Palestine; and, though living in the midst of a heathen population, had advantages enjoyed by very few of their brethren scattered elsewhere among the Gentiles. At Alexandria their sumptuous syna-

[1] Acts xviii. 18. [2] See Conybeare and Howson, i. 454. [3] Acts xviii. 19

gogues were unequivocal evidences of their wealth; they constituted a large and influential section of the inhabitants; they had much political power; and, whilst their study of the Greek philosophy had modified their habits of thought, they had acquired a taste for the cultivation of eloquence and literature. Apollos, the Jew, "born at Alexandria,"[1] who became acquainted with Aquila and Priscilla, was an educated and accomplished man. He "was instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, *knowing only the baptism of John*."[2] The influence of the preaching of the Baptist is seen in this incidental notice; for though the forerunner of our Saviour had finished his career a quarter of a century, the Alexandrian Jew was only one of many still living witnesses to testify that he had not ministered in vain. In this case John had indeed "prepared the way" of his Master, as, under the tuition of Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos was led without difficulty to embrace the Christian doctrine. This pious couple "took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly."[3] Priscilla was no less distinguished than her husband[4] for intelligence and zeal; and though she was prevented, as much by her native modesty, as by the constitution of the Church,[5] from officiating as a public instructor, she was "apt to teach"; and there must have been something most interesting and impressive in her private conversation. How remarkable that one of the ablest preachers of the apostolic age was largely indebted to a female for his acquaintance with Christian theology!

The accession, at this juncture, of such a convert as Apollos contributed greatly to advance the evangelical cause. The Church of Corinth, in the absence of Paul, much required the services of a minister of superior ability; and the learned Alexandrian was eminently qualified to promote its edification. He was "an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures."[6] After sojourning some time at Ephesus, it occurred to him

[1] Acts xviii. 24. [2] Acts xviii. 25. [3] Acts xviii. 26.

[4] She is named *before* Aquila in Acts xviii. 18; Rom. xvi. 3; and 2 Tim. iv. 19.

[5] 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35; 1 Tim. ii. 12. [6] Acts xviii. 24.

that he should have a more extensive sphere of usefulness at Corinth; and "when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote exhorting the disciples to receive him."[1] His friends in Asia had formed no exaggerated idea of his gifts and acquirements. When he reached the Greek capital, he "helped them much which had believed through grace; for he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ."[2] His surpassing rhetorical ability soon proved a snare to some of the hypercritical Corinthians and tempted them to institute invidious comparison between him and their great apostle. Hence in the first epistle addressed to them, the writer finds it necessary to rebuke them for their folly and fastidiousness. "While one saith I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye," says he, "not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase."[3]

When Aquila and Priscilla were at Ephesus expounding "the way of God more perfectly" to the Jew of Alexandria, Paul was travelling to Jerusalem. Three years before, he had been there to confer with the apostles and elders concerning the circumcision of the Gentiles; and he had not since visited the holy city. His present stay was short—apparently not extending beyond a few days at the time of the feast of Pentecost,—and giving him a very brief opportunity of intercourse with his brethren of the Jewish capital. He then "went down to Antioch"[4]—a place with which from the commencement of his missionary career he had been more intimately associated. "After he had spent some time there, he departed and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples."[5] On a former occasion, after he had passed through the same districts, he had been "forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in (the Proconsular) Asia";[6] but, at this time, the restriction was removed, and in accordance with the promise

[1] Acts xviii. 27. [2] Acts xviii. 27, 28. [3] 1 Cor. iii. 4–5.
[4] Acts xviii. 22. [5] Acts xviii. 23. [6] Acts xvi. 6.

made to the Jews at Ephesus in the preceding spring, he now resumed his evangelical labors in that far-famed metropolis. There must have been a strong disposition on the part of many of the seed of Abraham in the place to attend to his instructions, as he was permitted "for the space of *three months*" to occupy the synagogue, "disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God."[1] At length, however, he began to meet with so much opposition that he found it expedient to discontinue his addresses in the Jewish meeting-house. "When divers were hardened and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus."[2] This Tyrannus was, probably, a Gentile convert, and a teacher of rhetoric—a department of education very much cultivated at that period by all youths anxious to attain social distinction. What is here called his "school," was a spacious lecture-room sufficient to accommodate a numerous auditory.

About this time the Epistle to the Galatians was written. The Galatians, as their name indicated, were the descendants of a colony of Gauls settled in Asia Minor several centuries before; and, like the French of the present day, were distinguished by their lively and mercurial temperament. Paul had recently visited their country for the second time,[3] and had been received by them with the warmest demonstrations of regard; but meanwhile Judaizing zealots had appeared among them, and had been only too successful in their efforts to induce them to observe the Mosaic ceremonies. The apostle, at Antioch, and at the synod of Jerusalem, had already protested against these attempts; and subsequent reflection had only more thoroughly convinced him of their danger. Hence he here addresses the Galatians in terms of unusual severity.

[1] Acts xix. 8. [2] Acts xix. 9.

[3] That this epistle was written after the second visit appears from Gal. iv. 13. Mr. Ellicott asserts that "the first time" is here the preferable translation of τὸ πρότερον, and yet, rather inconsistently, adds, that "no historical conclusions can safely be drawn from this expression alone." See his "Critical and Grammatical Commentary on Galatians," iv. 13.

"I marvel," he exclaims, "that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel"—"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?"[1] At the same time he proves that the sinner is saved by faith alone; that the Mosaic institutions were designed merely for the childhood of the Church; and that the disciples of Jesus should refuse to be "entangled" with any such "yoke of bondage."[2] His epistle throughout is a most emphatic testimony to the doctrine of a free justification.

Some time after Paul reached Ephesus, on his return from Jerusalem, he made a short visit to Corinth.[3] He encountered a variety of dangers of which no record is to be found in the Acts of the Apostles;[4] and it is probable that many of these disasters were experienced at this period. Thus, not long after this date, he says, "Thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep."[5] There are good grounds for believing that he now visited Crete, as well as Corinth; and that these voyages exposed him to the "perils in the sea" which he enumerates among his trials.[6] On his departure from Crete he left Titus behind him to "set in order the things that were wanting, and to ordain elders in every city";[7] and in the spring of A.D. 57 he wrote to the evangelist that brief epistle in which he points out, with so much fidelity and wisdom, the duties of the pastoral office.[8] The silence of Luke respecting this visit to Crete is the less remarkable, as the name of Titus does not once occur in the

[1] Gal. i. 6, iii. 1. [2] Gal. ii. 16, iv. 1–4, v. 1.

[3] 1 Cor. xvi. 7; 2 Cor. xii. 14, xiii. 1.

[4] The Acts take no notice of various parts of his early career as a preacher. Compare Acts ix. 20–26 with Gal. i. 17.

[5] 2 Cor. xi. 25. [6] 2 Cor. xi. 26. [7] Titus i. 5.

[8] See Titus i. 6–11, ii. 1, 7, 8, 15, iii. 8–11. The reasons assigned in support of a later date for the writing of this epistle are not at all satisfactory. Paul directs the evangelist (Titus iii. 12) to come to him to Nicopolis, for he had "determined there to winter." This Nicopolis was in Greece, in the province of Achaia, and we know that Paul wintered there A.D. 57–58, Acts xx. 2, 3. See Schaff's "Apostolic Church," i. 390.

book of the Acts, though there is distinct evidence that he was deeply interested in some of the most important transactions which are there narrated.[1]

Paul, two years before, had been prevented, as has been stated, by a divine intimation, from preaching in the district called Asia; but when he now commenced his ministrations in Ephesus, its capital, he continued in that city and its neighborhood longer than in any other place he had yet visited. After withdrawing from the synagogue and resuming his labors in the school of Tyrannus, he remained there "by the space of *two years;* so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks."[2] Meanwhile the churches of Laodicea, Colosse, and Hierapolis were founded.[3] The importance of Ephesus gave it a special claim to the attention it now received. Being the metropolis of the district, and the greatest commercial city in the whole of Asia Minor, it was connected by convenient roads with all parts of the interior, and visited by trading vessels from the various harbors of the Mediterranean. But, in another point of view, it presented a peculiarly interesting field of missionary labor; for it was, perhaps, the most celebrated of all the high places of Eastern superstition. Its temple of Artemis, or Diana, was one of the wonders of the world. This gorgeous structure, covering an area of upwards of two acres,[4] was ornamented with columns, one hundred and twenty-seven in number, each sixty feet high, and each the gift of a king.[5] Though nearly all open to the sky, part of it was covered and roofed with cedar. The image of the goddess occupied a comparatively small apartment within the magnificent enclosure. This image, said to have fallen down from Jupiter,[6] was not like one of those pieces of beautiful sculpture

[1] 2 Cor. ii. 13, vii. 6, 13, viii. 6, 16, 23, xii. 18; Gal. ii. 1, 3.

[2] Acts xix. 10.

[3] See Col. iv. 13, 15, 16. These churches were not, however, founded by Paul. See Col. ii. 1.

[4] "This was the largest of the Greek temples. The area of the Parthenon at Athens was *not one-fourth* of that of the temple of Ephesus."—*Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography, Art.* EPHESUS.

[5] Conybeare and Howson, ii. 72.

[6] Acts xix. 35.

which adorned the Acropolis of Athens, but rather resembled an Indian idol, being an unsightly female form with many breasts, made of wood, and terminating below in a shapeless block.[1] On several parts of it were engraved mysterious symbols, called "Ephesian letters."[2] These letters, when *pronounced*, were believed to operate as charms, and, when *written*, were carried about as amulets. To those who sought an acquaintance with the Ephesian magic, they constituted an elaborate study, and many books were composed to expound their significance, and point out their application.

About this time the famous Apollonius of Tyana[3] was attracting uncommon attention by his tricks as a conjuror, and it is not improbable that he now met Paul in Ephesus. If so, we can assign at least one reason why the apostle was prevented from making his appearance at an earlier date in the Asiatic metropolis. Men had thus an opportunity of comparing the wonders of the greatest of magicians with the miracles of the Gospel, and of marking the contrast between the vainglory of an impostor, and the humility of a servant of Jesus. The attentive reader of Scripture may observe that some of the most extraordinary of the mighty works recorded in the New Testament were performed at this period, and it is not unreasonable to conclude that, in a city so much given to jugglery and superstition, these genuine displays of the power of Omnipotence were exhibited for the express purpose of demonstrating the incomparable superiority of the Author of Christianity. "God wrought *special miracles* by the hands of Paul, so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them."[4] The disastrous consequences of an attempt, on the part of the sons of a Jewish

[1] Conybeare and Howson, ii. 73. Minucius Felix, in his Octavius, speaks of Diana as represented "at Ephesus with many distended breasts ranged in tiers."

[2] Conybeare and Howson, ii. 13.

[3] His Life, written by Philostratus about A.D. 210, is full of lying wonders. His biographer mentions his visit to Ephesus, book iv. 1.

[4] Acts xix. 11, 12.

priest, to heal the afflicted by using the name of the Lord Jesus as a charm, alarmed the entire tribe of exorcists and magicians. "The man, in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus, and *fear fell on them all,* and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified."[1] The visit of Paul told upon the whole population, and tended greatly to discourage the study of the "Ephesian letters." "Many of them also, which used curious arts, brought their books together and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.[2] So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."[3]

Some time before the departure of Paul from Ephesus, he wrote the First Epistle to the Corinthians. The latter contains internal evidence that it was dictated in the spring of A.D. 57.[4] The circumstances of the Corinthian disciples at this juncture imperatively required the interference of the apostle. Divisions had sprung up in their community;[5] the flagrant conduct of one member had brought dishonor on the whole Christian name;[6] and various forms of error had been making their appearance.[7] Paul therefore felt it right to address to them a lengthened and energetic remonstrance. This letter is more diversified in its contents than any of his other epistles; and presents us with a very interesting view of the daily life of the primitive Christians in a great commercial city. It fur-

[1] Acts xix. 16, 17.

[2] The piece of silver here mentioned was worth about tenpence, so that the estimated value of the books burned was nearly $10,000.

[3] Acts xix. 19, 20.

[4] It was written not long before Paul left Ephesus, and probably about the time of the Passover. 1 Cor. v. 7, xvi. 5–8.

[5] 1 Cor. i. 11. [6] 1 Cor. v. 1.

[7] 1 Cor. xv. 12. This passage supplies evidence that errorists very soon made their appearance in the Christian Church, and furnishes an answer to those chronologists who date all the Pastoral Epistles after Paul's release from his first imprisonment, on the ground that the Gnostics had no existence at an earlier period.

nishes conclusive evidence that the Apostolic Church of Corinth was—not the paragon of excellence which the ardent and unreflecting have often pictured in their imaginations—but a community compassed with infirmities, and certainly not elevated, in point of spiritual worth, above some of the more healthy Christian congregations of the nineteenth century.

Shortly after this letter was transmitted to its destination, Ephesus was thrown into a ferment by the riotous proceedings of certain parties who had an interest in the maintenance of the pagan superstition. Among those who derived a subsistence from the idolatry of its celebrated temple were a class of workmen who "made silver shrines for Diana,"[1] that is, who manufactured little models of the sanctuary and of the image which it contained. These models were carried about by the devotees of the goddess in processions, and set up, in private dwellings, as household deities.[2] The impression produced by the Christian missionaries in the Asiatic metropolis had affected the traffic in such articles, and those who were engaged in it began to apprehend that their trade would be ultimately ruined. An individual, named Demetrius, who appears to have been a master-manufacturer, did not find it difficult, under these circumstances, to collect a mob, and to disturb the peace of the city. Calling together the operatives of his own establishment, "with the workmen of like occupation,"[3] he said to them, "Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover, ye see and know that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods which are made with hands—so that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought, but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth."[4] This address did not fail to produce the effect contemplated. A strong current of indignation was turned against the missionaries, and the craftsmen, with shouts of uproar, supported the credit of their tutelary guardian. They were

[1] Acts xix. 24.
[2] Conybeare and Howson, ii. 74.
[3] Acts xix. 25.
[4] Acts. xix. 25–27.

"full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians."[1] This proceeding took place in the month of May, and at a time when public games were celebrated in honor of the Ephesian goddess,[2] so that a large concourse of strangers now thronged the metropolis. An immense crowd rapidly collected; the whole city was filled with confusion; and the lives of the Christian preachers were in danger; for the mob caught "Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel," and "rushed with one accord into the theatre."[3] This edifice, the largest of the kind in Asia Minor, was capable of containing thirty thousand persons.[4] As it was sufficiently capacious to accommodate the multitudinous assemblage, and the building in which public meetings of the citizens were usually convened, it was now quickly occupied. Paul was at first prompted to enter it, and to plead his cause before the excited throng; but some of the magistrates, or, as they are called by the evangelist, "certain of the *chief of Asia*, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself" in such a position.[5] These *Asiarchs* were persons of exalted rank who presided at the celebration of the public spectacles. The apostle was in very humble circumstances, for even in Ephesus he continued to work at the occupation of a tent-maker;[6] and it is no mean testimony to his worth that he had secured the esteem of such high functionaries. It was quickly manifest that any attempt to appease the crowd must be in vain. A Jew, named Alexander, who seems to have been one of the craftsmen, and, perhaps, the same who is elsewhere distinguished as the "copper-

[1] Acts xix. 28.

[2] See Conybeare and Howson, ii. 79–81.

[3] Acts xix. 29.

[4] See Hackett's "Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles," p. 273.

[5] Acts xix. 31.

[6] Acts xx. 34. The Asiarchs "derived their title from the name of the province, as the corresponding officers in Cyprus, Syria, and Lydia, were called Cypriarchs, Syriarchs, Lydiarchs. Those of Asia are said to have been ten in number. . . . . As the games and sacrifices over which these Asiarchs presided, were provided at their own expense, they were always chosen from the richest class, and may be said to represent the highest rank of the community."—*Alexander on the Acts*, ii. 210.

smith,"[1] made an effort to address them, probably with the view of showing that his co-religionists were not identified with Paul; but when the mob perceived that he was of the seed of Abraham, they took it for granted that he was no friend to the manufacture of their silver shrines; and his appearance was the signal for increased uproar. "When they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice, *about the space of two hours*, cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians."[2] At length the town-clerk, or recorder, of Ephesus, contrived to obtain a hearing; and, by his prudence and address, succeeded in putting an end to this scene of confusion. He told his fellow-townsmen that, if Paul and his companions had transgressed the law, they were amenable to punishment; but that, as their own attachment to the worship of Diana could not be disputed, their present tumultuary proceedings only injured their reputation as orderly and loyal citizens. "We are in danger," said he, "to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse."[3] The authority of the speaker imparted additional weight to his suggestions, the multitude quietly dispersed, and the missionaries escaped unscathed.

Even this tumult supplies evidence that the Christian preachers had already produced an immense impression in the Asiatic metropolis. No more decisive test of their success could be adduced than that here furnished by Demetrius and his craftsmen; for a lucrative trade connected with the established superstition was beginning to languish. The silversmiths, and other interested operatives, were obviously the instigators of all the uproar; and yet they could not reckon upon the undivided sympathy even of the crowd they had congregated. "Some cried one thing, and some another, for the assembly was confused, and the *more part* knew not where-

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 14.

[2] Acts xix. 34. According to the ideas of the heathen, this unintermitted cry was, in itself, *an act of worship*; and hence we may understand why it was so long continued, but it is surely a notable example of "vain repetitions." See Hackett, p. 275.

[3] Acts xix. 40.

fore they were come together."[1] A number of the Asiarchs were decidedly favorable to the apostle and his brethren; and when the town-clerk referred to their proceedings his tone was apologetic and exculpatory. "Ye have," said he, "brought hither these men who are neither profaners of temples,[2] nor yet blasphemers of your goddess."[3] But here we see the real cause of much of that bitter persecution which the Christians endured for the greater part of three centuries. The craft of the image-makers was in danger; the income of the pagan priests was at stake; the secular interests of many other parties were more or less affected; and hence the new religion encountered such a cruel and obstinate opposition.

[1] Acts xix. 32.

[2] Our English version, "robbers of *churches*," is obviously incorrect. The Revised version of the New Testament reads, "robbers of *temples*."

[3] Acts xix. 37. It is plain from this passage that the apostle, when referring to the Gentile worship, avoided the use of language calculated to give unnecessary offence.

CHAPTER IX.

PAUL'S EPISTLES; HIS COLLECTION FOR THE POOR SAINTS AT JERUSALEM; HIS IMPRISONMENT THERE AND AT CÆSAREA AND ROME.

A.D. 57 to A.D. 63.

PAUL had determined to leave Ephesus at Pentecost,[1] and as the secular games, at which the Asiarchs presided, took place during the month of May, the disorderly proceedings of Demetrius and the craftsmen, which occurred at the same period, did not greatly accelerate his removal. Soon afterward, however, he "called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed to go into Macedonia."[2] When he reached that district, he was induced to enter on new scenes of missionary enterprise; and now, "round about unto Illyricum," he "fully preached the Gospel of Christ."[3] Shortly before, Timothy had returned from Greece to Ephesus,[4] and when the apostle took leave of his friends in that metropolis, he left the evangelist behind him to protect the infant Church against the seductions of false teachers.[5] He now addressed the first epistle to his "own son in the faith,"[6] and thus also supplied to the ministers of all succeeding generations the most precious instructions on pastoral theology.[7] Soon afterward

[1] 1 Cor. xvi. 8. [2] Acts xx. 1. [3] Rom. xv. 19.
[4] See Acts xix. 22. [5] 1 Tim. i. 3. [6] 1 Tim. i. 2.
[7] According to the chronology adopted in our English Bible, all the Pastoral Epistles were written after Paul's release from his first imprisonment, and this theory has recently been strenuously advocated by Conybeare and Howson, Alford, and Ellicott; but their reasonings are exceedingly unsatisfactory. For, I. The statement of Conybeare and Howson that "the three

he wrote the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. This letter throws much light on the private character of Paul, and enables us to understand how he contrived to maintain such a firm hold on the affections of those among whom he ministered. Though he uniformly acted with great decision, he was singularly amiable and gentle, as well as generous and warm-hearted. No one could doubt his sincerity; no one could question his disinterestedness; no one could fairly complain that he was harsh or unkind. In his First Epistle to the Corinthians he had been obliged to employ strong language when rebuking them for their irregularities; but now they exhibited evidences of repentance, and he is most willing to forget and forgive. In his Second Epistle to them he enters into many details of his personal history unnoticed elsewhere in the New Testament,[1] and throughout displays a most loving and conciliatory spirit. He states that, when he dictated his former letter, it was far from his intention to wound their

epistles were nearly contemporaneous with each other" is a mere assertion resting on no solid foundation; as resemblance in style, especially when all the letters were dictated by the same individual, can be no evidence as to date. II. There is direct evidence that heresies, such as those described in these epistles, existed in the Church long before Paul's first imprisonment. See 1 Cor. iii. 18, 19, xv. 12; 2 Cor. xi. 4, 13–15, 22, compared with 1 Tim. i. 3, 7. III. The early Churches were very soon organized, as appears from Acts xiv. 23; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; so that the state of ecclesiastical organization described in the First Epistle to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus is no proof of the late date of these letters. IV. But the grand argument in support of the early date, and one with which the advocates of the later chronology have never fairly grappled, is derived from the fact that Paul never was in Ephesus after the time mentioned in Acts xx. When he wrote to Timothy he intended shortly to return thither. See 1 Tim. i. 3, iii. 14, 15. It is evident that when the apostle addressed the elders of Ephesus (Acts xx. 25) and told them they should "see his face no more," he considered himself as speaking prophetically. It is clear, too, that his words were so understood by his auditors (Acts xx. 38), and that the evangelist who wrote them down several years afterward was still under the same impression. I agree, therefore, with Wieseler, and others, in assigning an early date to the First Epistle to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus.

[1] 2 Cor. xi. 9, 24–28, 32, 33, xii. 2, 7–9. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians was written late in A.D. 57.

feelings, and that it was with the utmost pain he had sent them such a communication. "Out of much affliction, and *anguish of heart*," said he, "I wrote unto you *with many tears*, not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you."[1] The Corinthians could not have well resented an advice from such a correspondent.

When Paul had itinerated throughout Macedonia and Illyricum "he came into Greece,[2] and there abode three months."[3] He now visited Corinth for the third time; and, during his stay in that city, dictated the Epistle to the Romans.[4] At this date, a Church "spoken of throughout the whole world"[5] had been formed in the great metropolis; some of its members were the relatives of the apostle;[6] and others, such as Priscilla and Aquila,[7] had been converted under his ministry. As he himself contemplated an early visit to the far-famed city,[8] he sent this letter before him, to announce his intentions, and to supply the place of his personal instructions. The Epistle to the Romans is a precious epitome of Christian theology. It is more systematic in its structure than any other of the writings of Paul; and being a very lucid exposition of the leading truths taught by the inspired heralds of the Gospel, it remains an emphatic testimony to the doctrinal defections of the religious community now bearing the name of the Church to which it was originally addressed.

The apostle had been recently making arrangements for another visit to Jerusalem; and he accordingly left Greece in the spring of A.D. 58; but the malignity of his enemies obliged him to change his plan of travelling. "When the Jews laid wait for him as he was about to sail" from Cenchrea, the port of Corinth, "into Syria," he found it expedient "to return through Macedonia."[9] Proceeding, therefore, to Philippi,[10] the city in which he had commenced his Euro-

[1] 2 Cor. ii. 4.
[2] εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα, *i.e.*, Achaia.
[3] Acts xx. 2, 3.
[4] Rom. xvi. 1, 2, 23.
[5] Rom. i. 8.
[6] Rom. xvi. 7, 11.
[7] Rom. xvi. 3.
[8] Acts xix. 21; Rom. i. 10, 11, xv. 23, 24.
[9] Acts xx. 3.
[10] Acts xx. 6.

pean ministry, he passed over to Troas;[1] and then continued his journey along the coast of Asia Minor. On his arrival at Miletus "he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the Church; and when they were come to him" he delivered to them a very pathetic pastoral address, and bade them farewell.[a] At the conclusion, "he kneeled down and prayed with them all, and they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake that they should see his face no more: and they accompanied him unto the ship."[2] He now pursued his course to Jerusalem, and after various delays, arrived at Cæsarea. There, says Luke, "we entered into the house of Philip, the evangelist, which was one of the seven, and abode with him."[4] In Cæsarea, as in other cities through which he had already passed, he was told that bonds and afflictions awaited him in the place of his destination;[5] but he was not thus deterred from pursuing his journey. "When he would not be persuaded," says the sacred historian, "we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done, and after those days, having packed up,[6] we went up to Jerusalem."[7] The apostle and his companions reached the holy city about the time of the feast of Pentecost.

Paul was well aware that there were not a few, even among the Christians of Palestine, by whom he was regarded with jealousy or dislike; and he had reason to believe that the agitation for the observance of the ceremonial law, which had disturbed the Churches of Galatia, had been promoted by the zealots of the Hebrew metropolis. But he had a strong attachment to the land of his fathers; and he felt deeply interested in the well-being of his brethren in Judea. They were generally in indigent circumstances; for, after the crucifixion,

[1] Acts xx. 6. [2] Acts xx. 17–35. [3] Acts xx. 36–38.
[4] Acts xxi. 8. [b] Acts xx. 23, xxi. 10, 11.
[6] *ἐπισκευασάμενοι*—the reading adopted by Lachmann and others. The word "carriages" used in the authorized version for baggage or luggage, is now unintelligible to the English reader. The word "carriage" is also used in our translation in Judges xviii. 21, and 1 Sam. xvii. 22, for something to be carried. [7] Acts xxi. 15.

when the Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost, those of them who had property "sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need";[1] and, ever since, they had been harassed and persecuted by their unbelieving countrymen. "The poor saints" in Jerusalem[2] had, therefore, peculiar claims on the kind consideration of the disciples in other lands; and Paul had been making collections for their benefit among their richer co-religionists in Greece and Asia Minor. A considerable sum had been thus provided; and that there might be no misgivings as to its right appropriation, individuals chosen by the contributors had been appointed to travel with the apostle, and to convey it to Jerusalem.[3] The number of the deputies was seven, namely, "Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus."[4] The apostle knew that he had enemies waiting for his halting; and as they would willingly have seized on any apology for accusing him of tampering with this collection, he deemed it prudent to put it into other hands, and thus place himself above challenge. But he had a farther reason for suggesting the appointment of these commissioners. He was desirous to present before his brethren in Judea a specimen of the men who constituted "the first-fruits of the Gentiles"; and as all the deputies selected to accompany him to Jerusalem were persons of an excellent spirit, he reckoned that their wise and winning behavior would do much to disarm the hostility of those who had hitherto contended so strenuously for the observance of the Mosaic ceremonies. Solomon has said that "a man's gift maketh room for him";[5] and if Gentile converts could ever expect a welcome reception from those who were zealous for the law, it was surely when they appeared as the bearers of the liberality of the Gentile Churches.

When the apostle and his companions reached the Jewish capital, "the brethren received them gladly."[6] Paul was,

[1] Acts ii. 45. [2] Rom. xv. 26. [3] 1 Cor. xvi. 3; 2 Cor. viii. 19.
[4] Acts xx. 4. [5] Prov. xviii. 16. [6] Acts xxi. 17.

however, given to understand that, as he was charged with encouraging the neglect of the Mosaic ceremonies, he must be prepared to meet a large amount of prejudice; and he was accordingly recommended to endeavor to pacify the multitude by giving some public proof that he himself "walked orderly and kept the law."[1] Acting on this advice, he joined with four men who had on them a Nazaritic vow;[2] and, "purifying himself with them, entered into the temple."[3] When there, he was observed by certain Jews from Asia Minor, who had become acquainted with his personal appearance during his residence in Ephesus; and as they had before seen him in the city with Trophimus, one of the seven deputies and a convert from paganism, whom they also knew,[4] they immediately concluded that he had now some Gentile companions along with him, and that he was encouraging the uncircumcised to pollute with their presence the sacred court of the Israelites. A tumult forthwith ensued; the report of the defilement of the holy place quickly circulated through the crowd; "all the city was moved";[5] the people ran together; and Paul was seized and dragged out of the temple.[6] The apostle would have fallen a victim to popular fury had it not been for the prompt interference of the officer who had the command of the Roman garrison in the tower of Antonia. This stronghold overlooked the courts of the sanctuary; and, some of the sentinels on duty

[1] Acts xxi. 24.

[2] "It was customary among the Jews for those who had received deliverance from any great peril, or who from other causes desired publicly to testify their dedication to God, to take upon themselves the vow of a Nazarite. . . . . No rule is laid down (Numb. vi.) as to the time during which this life of ascetic rigor was to continue; but we learn from the Talmud and Josephus that thirty days was at least a customary period. During this time the Nazarite was bound to abstain from wine, and to suffer his hair to grow uncut. At the termination of the period, he was bound to present himself in the temple, with certain offerings, and his hair was then cut off and burnt upon the altar. The offerings required were beyond the means of the very poor, and consequently it was thought an act of piety for a rich man to pay the necessary expenses, and thus enable his poorer countrymen to complete their vow."—*Conybeare and Howson*, ii. 250, 251.

[3] Acts xxi. 26. [4] Acts xxi. 29. [5] Acts xxi. 30. [6] Acts xxi. 30.

immediately gave notice of the commotion. The chief captain, whose name was Claudius Lysias,[1] "took soldiers and centurions," and running down to the rioters, arrived in time to prevent a fatal termination of the affray; for, as soon as the military made their appearance, the assailants "left beating of Paul."[2] "Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains, and demanded who he was, and what he had done. And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude, and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle."[3] In proceeding thus, the commanding officer acted illegally; for, as Paul was a Roman citizen, he should not, without a trial, have been deprived of his liberty, and put in irons. But Lysias, in the hurry and confusion of the moment deceived by false information, had been led to believe that his prisoner was an Egyptian, a notorious outlaw, who, "before these days," had created much alarm by leading "out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers."[4] He was astonished to find that the individual whom he had rescued from such imminent danger was a citizen of Tarsus in Cilicia who could speak Greek; and as it was now evident that there existed much misapprehension, the apostle was permitted to stand on the stairs of the fortress, and address the multitude. When they saw him preparing to make some statement, the noise subsided; and, "when they heard that he spake to them in the Hebrew tongue"—that is, in the Aramaic, the current language of the country—"they kept the more silence."[5] Paul accordingly proceeded to give an account of his early life, of the remarkable circumstances of his conversion, and of his subsequent

[1] Acts xxiii. 26. [2] Acts xxi. 32.

[3] Acts xxi. 33, 34. There were barracks in the tower of Antonia.

[4] Acts xxi. 38. "*Assassins* is in the original a Greek inflection of the Latin word *Sicarii*, so called from *Sica*, a short sword or dagger, and described by Josephus as a kind of robbers who concealed short swords beneath their garments, and infested Judea in the period preceding the destruction of Jerusalem."—*Alexander on the Acts*, ii. 289.

[5] Acts xxii. 2.

career; but, when he mentioned his mission to the Gentiles, it was at once apparent that the topic was most unpopular, for his auditors lost all patience. "They gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air, the chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle."[1]

The confinement of Paul, which commenced at the feast of Pentecost in A.D. 58, continued about five years. It may be enough to notice the mere outline of his history during this tedious bondage. In the first place, for the purpose of ascertaining the exact nature of the charge against him, he was confronted with the Sanhedrim; but when he informed them that "of the hope and resurrection of the dead he was called in question,"[2] there "arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees"[3] constituting the council; and the chief captain, fearing lest his prisoner "should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle."[4] Certain of the Jews, about forty in number, now entered into a conspiracy, binding themselves "under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul";[5] and it was arranged that the bloody vow should be executed when, under pretence of a new examination, he was brought again before the Sanhedrim; but their proceedings meanwhile became known to the apostle's nephew; the chief captain received timely information; and the scheme thus miscarried.[6] Paul, protected by a strong military escort, was now sent away by night to Cæsarea; and, when there, was repeatedly examined before Felix, the Roman magistrate who at this time, under the title of Procurator, had the government of Judea. The historian Tacitus says of this imperial functionary that "in the practice of all kinds of cruelty and lust, he exercised the power of a king with the mind of a

[1] Acts xxii. 22–24. [2] Acts xxiii. 6. [3] Acts xxiii. 7.
[4] Acts xxiii. 10. [5] Acts xxiii. 12, 21. [6] Acts xxiii. 16, 23, 30.

slave";[1] and it is a remarkable proof, as well of the intrepid faithfulness, as of the eloquence of the apostle, that he succeeded in arresting the attention, and in alarming the fears of this worthless profligate. Drusilla, his wife, a woman who had deserted her former husband,[2] was a Jewess; and, as she was desirous to see and hear the great Christian preacher who had been laboring with so much zeal to propagate his principles throughout the Empire, Paul, to satisfy her curiosity, was brought into her presence. But an interview, designed merely for the amusement of the Procurator and his partner, soon assumed an appearance of the deepest solemnity. As the grave and earnest orator went on to expound the faith of the Gospel, and "as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled."[3] His apprehensions, however, soon passed away, and though he was fully convinced that Paul had not incurred any legal penalty, he continued to keep him in confinement, basely expecting to obtain a bribe for his liberation. When disappointed in this hope, he still perversely refused to set him at liberty. Thus, "after two years," when "Porcius Festus came into Felix's room," the ex-Procurator, "willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound."[4]

The apostle was soon required to appear before the new Governor. Festus has left behind him the reputation of an equitable judge;[5] and though he was most desirous to secure the good opinion of the Jews, he could not be induced by them to act with palpable injustice. After he had brought them down to Cæsarea, and listened to their complaints against the prisoner, he perceived that they could convict him of no violation of the law; but he proposed to gratify them so far as to have the case reheard in the holy city. Paul, however, well knew that they only sought such an opportunity to compass his assassination, and therefore peremp-

[1] "Per omnem sævitam ac libidinem jus regium servili ingenio exercuit." —*Hist.* v. 9.

[2] Josephus' "Antiq." xx. c. 7, §§ 1, 2.

[3] Acts xxiv. 25.

[4] Acts xxiv. 27.

[5] See some account of him in Josephus' "Antiq." xx. c. 8, §§ 9, 10.

torily refused to consent to the arrangement. "I stand," said he, "at Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. For if I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. *I appeal unto Cæsar.*" [1]

The right of appeal from the decision of an inferior tribunal to the Emperor himself was one of the great privileges of a Roman citizen; and no magistrate could refuse to recognize it without exposing himself to condign punishment. There were, indeed, a few exceptional cases of a flagrant character in which such an appeal could not be received; and Festus here consulted with his assessors to ascertain in what light the law contemplated that of the apostle. They decided, however, that he was at perfect liberty to demand a hearing before the tribunal of Nero. "Then," says the evangelist, "when Festus had conferred with the council, he answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? Unto Cæsar shalt thou go." [2]

The Procurator was placed in an awkward position; for, when sending Paul to Rome, he was required at the same time to report the crimes imputed to the prisoner; but the charges were so novel and so frivolous, that he did not well know how to embody them in an intelligible document. Meanwhile King Agrippa and his sister Bernice came to Cæsarea "to salute Festus," [3] that is, to congratulate the new Governor on his arrival in the country; and the royal party expressed a desire to hear what the apostle had to say in his vindication. Agrippa was great-grandson of that Herod who reigned in Judea when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and the son of the monarch of the same name whose sudden and awful death is recorded in the twelfth chapter of the Acts. On the demise of his father in A.D. 44, he

[1] Acts xxv. 11. [2] Acts xxv. 12.

[3] Acts xxv. 13. Festus appears to have been Procurator from the beginning of the autumn of A.D. 60 to the summer of A.D. 62. Felix was recalled A.D. 60. See Conybeare and Howson, Appendix ii. note (C).

was only seventeen years of age; and Judea, which was then reduced into the form of a Roman province with Cæsarea for its capital, had remained ever since under the government of Procurators. But though Agrippa had not been permitted to succeed to the dominions of his father, he had received various proofs of imperial favor; for he had obtained the government, first of the principality of Chalcis, and then of several other districts; and he had been honored with the title of King.[1] The Gentile Procurators were seldom acquainted with the ritual and polity of Israel; but as Agrippa was a Jew, and consequently familiar with the customs and sentiments of the native population, he had been intrusted with the care of the temple and its treasures, as well as with the appointment of the high-priest. Festus felt that, in the case of Paul, the advice of this visitor should be solicited; and hoped to obtain from Agrippa some suggestion to relieve him out of his present perplexity. It was accordingly arranged that the apostle should plead his cause in the hearing of the Jewish monarch. The affair created unusual interest; the public were partially admitted on the occasion; and rarely or, perhaps, never before, had Paul enjoyed an opportunity of addressing such an influential and brilliant auditory. "Agrippa came, and Bernice, *with great pomp*, and entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city."[2] Paul, still in bonds, made his appearance before this courtly throng; and though a two years' confinement might well have broken the spirit of the prisoner, he displayed powers of argument and eloquence which astonished and confounded his judges. The Procurator was quite bewildered by his reasoning, for he appealed to "the promise made unto the fathers,"[3] and to things which "Moses and the prophets did say should come";[4] and as Festus could not appreciate the lofty enthusiasm of the Christian orator (for he had never, when at Rome, been accustomed to hear the advocates of heathenism plead so earnestly in its defence), he "said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learn-

[1] Josephus' "Wars," ii. c. 12, § 8; "Antiq." xx. c. 5, § 2.

[2] Acts xxv. 23. [3] Acts xxvi. 6. [4] Acts xxvi. 22.

ing doth make thee mad."[1] But the apostle's self-possession was in nowise shaken by this blunt charge. "I am not mad, most noble Festus," he replied, "but speak forth the words of truth and soberness"; and then, turning to the royal stranger, vigorously pressed home his argument. "King Agrippa," he exclaimed, "believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest."[2] The King, thus challenged, was a libertine; and at this very time was believed to be living in incestuous intercourse with his sister Bernice; and yet he seems to have been staggered by Paul's solemn and pointed interrogatory. "Almost," said he, "thou persuadest me to be a Christian."[3] It has been thought by some that these words were uttered with a sneer; but whatever may have been the frivolity of the Jewish King, they elicited from the apostle one of the noblest rejoinders that ever issued from human lips, "And Paul said, I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."[4]

The singularly able defence made by the apostle convinced his judges of the futility of the charges preferred against him by the Sanhedrim. But at this stage of the proceedings it was no longer practicable to quash the prosecution. When Paul concluded his address "the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them. And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar."[5]

At first sight it appears extraordinary that so eminent a missionary in the meridian of his usefulness was subjected to so long an imprisonment. But "God's ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts." When thus, to a great extent, laid aside from official duty, he had ample time to

[1] Acts xxiv. 24. [2] Acts xxvi. 27.

[3] Acts xxvi. 28. Some translate ἐν ὀλίγῳ "in short," instead of "almost." The revised English version reads, "With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian."

[4] Acts xxvi. 29. [5] Acts xxvi. 30–32.

commune with his own heart, and to trace out with adoring wonder the glorious grace and the manifold wisdom of the work of redemption. Having himself partaken largely of affliction, and experienced the sustaining power of the Gospel so abundantly, he was the better prepared to comfort the distressed; and hence his letters, written at this period, are so full of consolation.[1] And apart from other considerations, we may here recognize the fulfilment of a prophetic announcement. When Paul was converted, the Lord said to Ananias: "He is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles, and *kings*, and the children of Israel, for I will show him *how great things he must suffer* for my name's sake."[2] During his protracted confinement he exhibited alike to Jew and Gentile an illustrious specimen of faith and constancy; and called attention to the truth in many quarters where otherwise it might have remained unknown. Though he was chained to a soldier, he was not kept in very rigorous custody, so that he had frequent opportunities of proclaiming the great salvation. He was peculiarly fitted by his education and his genius for expounding Christianity to persons moving in the upper circles of society; and had he remained at liberty he could have gained access very rarely to such auditors. But already, as a prisoner, he had pleaded the claims of the Gospel before no inconsiderable portion of the aristocracy of Palestine. He had been heard by the chief captain in command of the garrison in the castle of Antonia, by the Sanhedrim, by Felix and Drusilla, by Festus, by King Agrippa and his sister Bernice, and by "the principal men" of both Cæsarea and Jerusalem. In criminal cases the appeals of Roman citizens were heard by the Emperor himself, so that the apostle was about to appear as an ambassador for Christ in the presence of the greatest of earth's potentates. Who can tell but that some of that splendid assembly of senators and nobles who surrounded Nero, when Paul was brought before his judgment-seat, will have

[1] Eph. vi. 22; Phil. ii. 1, 2; Col. i. 24, iv. 8; Philem. 7, compared with 2 Cor. i. 3, 4.

[2] Acts ix. 15, 16.

reason throughout all eternity to remember the occasion as the birthday of their blessedness!

The apostle and "certain other prisoners" embarked for Rome in the autumn of A.D. 60. The compass was then unknown; in weather, "when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared,"[1] the mariner was without a guide; and, late in the season, navigation was peculiarly dangerous. The voyage proved disastrous; after passing into a second vessel at Myra,[2] a city of Lycia, Paul and his companions were wrecked on the coast of the island of Malta;[3] when they had remained there three months, they set sail once more in a corn ship of Alexandria, the *Castor and Pollux*;[4] and at length, in the early part of A.D. 61, reached the harbor of Puteoli,[5] then the great shipping port of Italy.

The account of the voyage from Cæsarea to Puteoli, as given in the Acts of the Apostles, is one of the most curious passages to be found in the whole of the sacred volume. Some may think it strange that the inspired historian enters so much into details, and the nautical terms which he employs puzzle not a few readers; but these features of his narrative attest its authenticity and genuineness. No one, who had not himself shared the perils of the scene, could have described with so much accuracy the circumstances of the shipwreck. After the lapse of eighteen hundred years, the references of the evangelist to prevailing winds and cur-

[1] Acts xxvii. This part of the history of the apostle has been illustrated with singular ability by James Smith, Esq., of Jordanhill, in his "Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul."

[2] Acts xxvii. 5, 6.

[3] Acts xxviii. 1. That Melita is Malta has been conclusively established by Smith in his "Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul." "Dissertation," ii.

[4] Acts xxviii. 11. "With regard to the dimensions of the ships of the ancients, some of them must have been quite equal to the largest merchantmen of the present day. The ship of St. Paul had, in passengers and crew, 276 persons on board, besides her cargo of wheat, and as they were carried on by another ship of the same class, she must also have been of great size. The ship in which Josephus was wrecked contained 600 people."—Smith's "Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul," p. 147.

[5] Acts xxviii. 13.

rents, to the indentations of the coast, to islands, bays, and harbors, may still be exactly verified. Recent investigators have demonstrated that the sailors, in the midst of danger, displayed no little ability, and that their conduct in "undergirding the ship,"[1] and in casting "four anchors out of the stern,"[2] evidenced their skilful seamanship. Luke states that, after a long period of anxiety and abstinence, "about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country."[3] The headland they were approaching is very low, and in a stormy night is said to be invisible even at the distance of a quarter of a mile;[4] but the sailors detect the shore by other indications. Even in a storm *the roar of breakers* can be distinguished from other sounds by the practiced ear of a mariner;[5] and it can be shown that, with such a gale as was then blowing, the sea still dashes with amazing violence against the very same point of land off which Paul and his companions were that night laboring. In the depth of the water at the place there is another most remarkable coincidence. The sailors "sounded and found it *twenty fathoms*, and when they had gone a little farther, they sounded, and found it *fifteen fathoms*."[6] "But what," observes a modern writer, "are the soundings at this point? They are now *twenty fathoms*. If we proceed a little farther we find *fifteen fathoms*. It may be said that this, in itself, is nothing remarkable. But if we add that the fifteen-fathom depth is *in the direction of the vessel's drift* (W. by N.) from the twenty-fathom depth, the coincidence is startling."[7] It may be stated also that the

[1] Acts xxvii. 17.

[2] Acts xxvii. 29. "The ancient vessels did not carry, in general, so large anchors as those which we employ; and hence they had often a greater number of them. Athenæus mentions a ship which had eight iron anchors." —Hackett, p. 372.

[3] Acts xxvii. 27.

[4] "When the *Lively*, frigate, unexpectedly fell in with this very point, the quartermaster on the look-out, who first observed it, states, in his evidence at the court-martial, that, *at the distance of a quarter of a mile*, the land could not be seen."—Smith's *Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul*, pp. 89, 90.

[5] Hackett, p. 371. [6] Acts xxvii. [7] Conybeare and Howson, ii. 351.

"creek with a shore"[1] or sandy beach, and the "place where two seas met,"[2] and where "they ran the ship aground," may still be recognized in what is now called St. Paul's Bay at Malta.[3] Even in the nature of the submarine strata we have a most striking confirmation of the truth of the inspired history. It appears that the four anchors cast out of the stern retained their hold, and it is well known that the ground in St. Paul's Bay is remarkably firm; for in our English sailing directions it is mentioned that "while the cables hold, there is no danger, as the anchors will never start."[4] Luke reports that when the ship ran aground, "the forepart stuck fast and remained unmovable"[5]—a statement which is corroborated by the fact that "the bottom is mud graduating into tenacious clay"[6]—exactly the species of deposit from which such a result might be anticipated.

When Paul landed at Puteoli, he must have contemplated with deep emotion the prospect of his arrival in Rome. The city to which he now approached contained, perhaps, upwards of a million of human beings.[7] But the amount of its inhabitants was one of the least remarkable of its extraordinary distinctions. It was the capital of the mightiest empire that had ever yet existed; one hundred races speaking one hundred languages were under its dominion;[8] and the sceptre which ruled so many subject provinces was wielded by an absolute potentate. This great autocrat was the high-priest of heathenism—thus combining the grandeur of temporal majesty with the sacredness of religious elevation. Senators and generals,

[1] Acts xxvii. 39. [2] Acts xxvii. 41.

[3] Smith's "Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul," p. 102.

[4] Smith's "Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul," p. 92.

[5] Acts xxvii. 41.

[6] Smith's "Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul," p. 104.

[7] Conybeare and Howson make the population more than 2,000,000 (ii. 376). Merivale reduces it to something less than 700,000 (iv. 520). In Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography" it is stated as upwards of 2,000,000. Greswell makes it about 1,000,000 ("Dissertations," iv. 46.) Dean Milman reckons it from 1,000,000 to 1,500,000 ("History of Latin Christianity," i. 23).

[8] Merivale, iv. 391.

petty kings and provincial governors, were all obliged to bow obsequiously to his mandates. In this vast metropolis might be found natives of almost every clime; some engaged in its trade; some who had travelled to it from distant countries to solicit the imperial favor; some, like Paul, conveyed to it as prisoners; some stimulated to visit it by curiosity; and some attracted to it by the vague hope of bettering their condition. The city of the Cæsars has well been described as "sitting upon many waters";[1] for, though fourteen or fifteen miles from the mouth of the Tiber, the mistress of the world was placed on a peninsula stretching out into the middle of a great inland sea over which she reigned without a rival. In the summer months almost every part of every country along the shores of the Mediterranean sent forth vessels freighted with cargoes for the merchants of Rome.[2] The fleet from Alexandria laden with wheat for the supply of the city was treated with peculiar honor; for its ships alone were permitted to hoist their topsails as they approached the shore; a deputation of senators awaited its arrival; and, as soon as it appeared, the whole surrounding population streamed to the pier, and observed the day as a general jubilee. But an endless supply of other articles in which the poor were less interested found their way to Rome. The mines of Spain furnished the great capital with gold and silver, whilst its sheep yielded wool of superior excellence; and, in those times of Roman conquest, slaves were often transported from the shores of Britain. The horses and chariots and fine linen of Egypt, the gums and spices and silk and ivory and pearls of India, the Chian and the Lesbian wines, and the beautiful marble of Greece and Asia Minor, all met with purchasers in the mighty metropolis.[3] As John surveyed in vision the fall of Rome, and as he thought of the almost countless commodities which ministered to her insatiable luxury, well might he represent the world's traffic as destroyed by the catastrophe; and well might he speak of the merchants of the earth as weeping and mourn-

[1] Rev. xvii. 1. [2] Merivale, iv. 412. [3] Merivale, iv. 414–420.

ing over her, because "no man buyeth their merchandise any more."[1]

Paul had often desired to prosecute his ministry in the imperial city; for he knew that if Christianity obtained a firm footing in that great centre of civilization and of power, its influence would soon be transmitted to the ends of the earth; but he appeared there under circumstances equally painful and discouraging. And yet even in this embarrassing position he was not overwhelmed with despondency. At Puteoli he "found brethren,"[2] and through the indulgence of Julius, the centurion to whose care he was committed, he was courteously allowed to spend a week[3] with the little Church of which they were members. He now set out on his way to the metropolis; but the intelligence of his arrival had travelled before him, and after crossing the Pomptine marshes, he was delighted to find a number of Christian friends from Rome assembled at Appii Forum to tender to him the assurances of their sympathy and affection. The place was twenty-seven miles from the capital; and yet, at a time when travelling was so tedious and so irksome, they had undertaken this lengthened journey to visit the poor, weather-beaten, and tempest-tossed prisoner. At the Three Taverns, ten miles nearer to the city, he met another party of disciples[4] anxious to testify their attachment to so distinguished a servant of their Divine Master. These tokens of respect and love made a deep impression on the susceptible mind of the apostle; and when he saw the brethren, "he thanked God and took courage."[5]

The important services he had been able to render on the voyage gave him a claim to particular indulgence; and accordingly, when he reached Rome, and when the centurion delivered the prisoners to the Prætorian Prefect, or the commander-in-chief of the Prætorian guards,[6] "Paul was suffered to

[1] Rev. xviii. 11. [2] Acts xxviii. 14. [3] Acts xxviii. 14.

[4] Acts xxviii. 15. [5] Acts xxviii. 15.

[6] Called in our English version, "the captain of the guard." The celebrated Burrus was at this time (A.D. 61) the Prætorian Prefect. Wieseler, p. 393. See also Greswell's "Dissertations," iv. p. 199.

dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him."[1] But though he enjoyed this comparative liberty, he was chained to his military care-taker, so that his position was still very far from comfortable. And yet even thus he continued his ministry with as much ardor as if he had been without restraint, and as if he had been cheered on by the applause of his generation. Three days after his arrival in the city he "called the chief of the Jews together,"[2] and gave them an account of the circumstances of his committal, and of his appeal to the imperial tribunal. They informed him that his case had not been reported to them by their brethren in Judea, and then expressed a desire to hear from him a statement of the claims of Christianity. "And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging, to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets, from morning till evening."[3] His appeals produced a favorable impression on only a part of his audience. "Some believed the things which were spoken and some believed not."[4]

Several years prior to this date a Christian Church existed in the Western metropolis, and at this time there were probably several ministers in the city; but the apostle now entered on a field of labor which had not hitherto been occupied. He "dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him—preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him."[5] All this time Paul's right hand was chained to the left hand of a soldier, who was responsible for the safe keeping of his prisoner. The soldiers relieved each other in this duty.[6] Paul's chain was relaxed at meal-times, and perhaps he was occasionally granted some little additional indulgence; but day and night he and his care-taker remained in close proximity, as the life of the soldier was forfeited should his ward escape. We can well conceive that the very appearance of the

[1] Acts xxviii. 16. [2] Acts xxviii. 17. [3] Acts xxviii. 23.
[4] Acts xxviii. 24. [5] Acts xxviii. 31. [6] Conybeare and Howson, ii. 296.

preacher at this period invited special attention to his ministrations. He was "Paul the aged."[1] He had perhaps passed the verge of three-score years; and though his detractors had formerly objected to "his bodily presence as weak,"[2] all would at this time have probably admitted that his aspect was venerable. His life had been a career of unabated exertion; and, though worn down by toils and hardships and imprisonments, his zeal burned with unquenched ardor. As the soldier who kept him belonged to the Prætorian guards, the apostle spent much of his time in the neighborhood of their quarters on the Palatine hill";[3] and as he was now so conversant with military sights and sounds, we may account for some of the allusions to be found in his epistles written during this confinement. Thus, he speaks of Archippus and Epaphroditus as his "fellow soldiers";[4] and he exhorts his brethren to "put on the whole armor of God," including "the breast-plate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit."[5] As the indefatigable old man, with the soldier who had charge of him, passed from house to house inviting attendance on his services, the very appearance of such "yoke-fellows"[6] created some interest; and, when the congregation assembled, who could remain unmoved as the apostle stretched forth his chained hand[7] and proceeded to expound his message! The preacher himself thought that the position which he occupied, as "the prisoner of the Lord,"[8] imparted somewhat to the power of his testimony. Hence we find him saying: "I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out *rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel*, so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the Prætorium,[9] and in all other

[1] Philem. 9. [2] 2 Cor. x. 10. [3] See Conybeare and Howson, ii. 428.

[4] Phil. ii. 25; Philem. 2. [5] Eph. vi. 13, 14, 16, 17.

[6] Phil. iv. 3. When speaking of a "*true* yoke-fellow," he may here refer to the way in which he was himself unequally yoked.

[7] See Acts xxvi. 1, 29. [8] Eph. iv. 1.

[9] ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ—"We never find the word employed for the Imperial house at Rome; and we believe the truer view to be that it denotes here, not the palace itself, but the quarters of that part of the Imperial guards which was in immediate attendance on the Emperor."—*Conybeare and Howson*, ii. 428.

places; and many of the brethren in the Lord waxing confident by my bonds are much more bold to speak the word without fear."[1]

During this imprisonment at Rome Paul dictated a number of his epistles. Of these the letter to Philemon, a Christian of Colosse, seems to have been first written. The bearer of this communication was Onesimus, who had at one time been a slave in the service of the individual to whom it is addressed; and who, after robbing his master, had left the country. The thief made his way to Rome, where he was converted under the ministry of the apostle, and where he had since greatly recommended himself as a zealous and trustworthy disciple. He was now sent back to Colosse with this Epistle to Philemon, in which the writer undertakes to be accountable for the property pilfered,[2] and entreats his correspondent to give a kindly reception to the penitent fugitive. Onesimus, when conveying the letter to his old master, was accompanied by Tychicus, described as "a beloved brother and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord,"[3] who was intrusted with the Epistle to the Colossians. Error, in the form of false philosophy and Judaizing superstition, had been creeping into the Colossian Church,[4] and the apostle in this letter exhorts his brethren to beware of its encroachments. At the same time Paul wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians, and Tychicus was also the bearer of this communication.[5] Unlike most of the other epistles, it has no salutations at the close; it is addressed, not only "to the saints which are at Ephesus" in particular, but also "to the faithful in Christ Jesus"[6] in general; and, as its very superscription thus bears evidence that it was originally intended to be a circular letter, it is probably "the epistle from Laodicea" mentioned in the Epistle to the Colossians.[7] The first division of it is eminently distinguished by the profound and comprehensive views of the Christian system it exhibits; whilst the latter portion is no less remarkable for the variety, pertinency,

[1] Phil. i. 12–14. [2] Philem. 18, 19. [3] Col. iv. 7.
[4] Col. ii. 8, 16, 18, 23. [5] Eph. vi. 21, 22. [6] Eph. i. 1. [7] Col. iv. 16.

and wisdom of its practical admonitions. The Epistle to the Philippians was likewise written about this period. Paul always took a deep interest in the well-being of his earliest European converts, and here he speaks in most hopeful terms of their spiritual condition.[1] They were less disturbed by divisions and heresies than perhaps any other of the Apostolic Churches.

[1] Phil. i. 3–7.

CHAPTER X.

PAUL'S SECOND IMPRISONMENT AND MARTYRDOM; PETER, HIS EPISTLES, HIS MARTYRDOM, AND THE ROMAN CHURCH.

THE Book of the Acts terminates abruptly; and the subsequent history of Paul is involved in much obscurity. Some contend that the apostle was never released from his first imprisonment at Rome, and that he was one of the earliest Christian martyrs who suffered under the Emperor Nero. But this theory is encumbered with insuperable difficulties. In his letters from Rome, Paul evidently anticipates his liberation;[1] and in some of them he apparently speaks prophetically. Thus, he says to the Philippians, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better—nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you—and having this confidence, *I know that I shall abide and continue* with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith."[2] The apostle had long cherished a desire to visit Spain;[3] and there is evidence that he actually preached the Gospel in that country; for Clemens Romanus, his contemporary and fellow-laborer, positively affirms that he travelled "to the extremity of the west."[4] Clemens is said to have been himself a native of the great metropolis;[5] and as he makes the statement just quoted in a letter written from

[1] Phil. ii 24; Philem. 22. [2] Phil. i. 23–25. [3] Rom. xv. 24, 28.

[4] ἐπὶ τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως—Epist. to the Corinthians v. Clement in the same place mentions that Paul was *seven times* in bonds. See also Greswell, "Dissertations," vol. iv., pp. 225–228.

[5] See Cave's "Fathers," i. 147. Oxford, 1840.

Rome, it can not be supposed that, under such circumstances, he described Italy as the boundary of the earth. The Second Epistle to Timothy, written immediately before Paul's death, contains several passages which indicate that the author had been very recently at liberty. Thus, he says, "The cloak[1] (or, as some render it, *the case*[2]) that I left at Troas, with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments."[3] These words suggest that the apostle had lately visited Troas, on the coast of Asia Minor. Again, he remarks, "Erastus abode at Corinth, but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick."[4] Any ordinary reader would infer from this that the writer had just been at Miletum.[5] The language of the concluding verses of the Acts warrants the impression that Paul's confinement ended some time before the history was completed; for had the apostle been still in bondage, it would not have been said that, when a prisoner, he dwelt for two whole years in his own hired house—thereby implying that the period of his residence, at least in that abode, had terminated. And if Paul was released at the expiration of these two years, we can well understand why the sacred historian did not give an account of his liberation. The subjects of Rome at that time were literally living under a reign of terror; and if Paul, as Peter once before,[6] was miraculously delivered, prudence required the

[1] *τὸν φελόνην*. Some think that he wished for the cloak to protect him against the cold of winter. See 2 Tim. iv. 21.

[2] In the "Life of St. Columba" by Adamnan (Dublin, 1857), the editor, Dr. Reeves, has given an interesting account of an ancient leather book-case in his own possession. See "Life of St. Columba," p. 115. If Paul referred to a case, it was probably to one of a larger description.

[3] 2 Tim. iv. 13. In the anticipation of his death, he perhaps wished to give the documents as a legacy to some of his friends. Among them may have been Scripture autographs.

[4] 2 Tim. iv. 20. *ἀπέλιπον*. The translation "*they* left," instead of "*I* left," is given up even by Dr. Davidson, though he rejects the idea of a second imprisonment. See his "Introduction to the New Testament," iii. 53.

[5] Miletum, or Miletus, in Crete, is mentioned by Homer, "Iliad," ii. 647.

[6] Acts xii. 6–9.

concealment of his subsequent movements. Or, the history of his release may have been so mixed up with the freaks of the tyrant who then oppressed the Roman world, that its publication would have brought down the imperial vengeance on the head of the evangelist.

We have seen that Paul arrived in Rome as a prisoner in the beginning of A.D. 61 ; and if at this time his confinement continued only two years, he was liberated in the early part of A.D. 63. Nero had not yet commenced his memorable persecution of the Church ; for the burning of the city took place in the summer of A.D. 64; and, till that date, the disciples were not singled out as the special objects of his cruelty. It is probable that Paul, after his release, accomplished his intention of visiting the Spanish Peninsula ;[1] and that, on his return to Italy, he wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews.[2] The destruction of Jerusalem was now approaching ; and as the apostle demonstrates in this letter that the law was fulfilled in Christ, he thus prepares the Jewish Christians for the extinction of the Mosaic ritual. He once more visited Jerusalem, travelling to Corinth,[3] Philippi,[4] and Troas,[5] where he left for the use of Carpus the case with the books and parchments which he mentions in his Second Epistle to Timothy. Passing on to Colosse,[6] he perhaps visited Antioch in Pisidia and other cities of Asia Minor, the scenes of his early ministrations ; and reached Jerusalem[7] by way of Antioch in Syria. He returned from Palestine to Rome by sea, leaving Trophimus sick[8] at Miletum in Crete. The journey did not occupy much time ; and, on his return to Italy, he was immediately incarcerated. His condition was now very different from what it had been during his former confinement ; for he was deserted by his

[1] See Euseb. ii. 22.

[2] Heb. xiii. 23, 24. In this epistle he apparently refers to his late imprisonment, Heb. x. 34 ; but the reading of the *textus receptus* is here rejected by many of our highest critical authorities, such as Griesbach, Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Scholz. Respecting the second imprisonment, see also Eusebius, ii. c. 22.

[3] 2 Tim. iv. 20. [4] Phil. ii. 24. [5] 2 Tim. iv. 13.

[6] Philem. 22. [7] Heb. xiii. 23. [8] 2 Tim. iv. 20.

friends and treated as a malefactor.[1] When he wrote to Timothy he had already been brought before the judgment-seat, and had narrowly escaped martyrdom. "At my first answer," says he, "no man stood with me, but all men forsook me. I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear;[2] and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion."[3] The prospect, however, still continued gloomy; and he had no hope of ultimate escape. In the anticipation of his condemnation, he wrote those words so full of Christian faith and heroism, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight—I have finished my course—I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."[4]

Paul was martyred about A.D. 66. Tradition reports that he was beheaded;[5] and as he was a Roman citizen, he could not have been legally condemned to any more ignominious fate. About the third or fourth century, a statement appeared to the effect that he and Peter were put to death at Rome on the same day;[6] but all the early documentary evidence we possess is quite opposed to such a representation. If Peter really finished his career in the Western metropolis at the same time as the Apostle of the Gentiles, it is strange that Paul makes no reference, in any of his writings, to the presence of such a fellow-laborer in the capital of the Empire. In the Epistle to the Romans, containing so many salutations to the brethren in the great city, the name of Peter is not found; and in none of the letters written *from* Rome is he

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 16, ii. 9.

[2] This refers to some powerful defence of Christianity which he had made before the Gentile tribunal of Nero.

[3] 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17. [4] 2 Tim. iv. 6–8. [5] Euseb. "Hist." ii. 25.

[6] Euseb ii. 25. See the Note of Valesius on the words *κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν καιρὸν*. See also Davidson's "Introduction to the New Testament," iii. 361.

ever mentioned. In the last of his Epistles—the Second to Timothy—the writer says, "*only Luke* is with me"[1]—and had Peter then been in the place, Paul would not have thus ignored the existence of the apostle of the circumcision.

Though Rome has been so long known in ecclesiastical annals as "the see of Peter," it is remarkable that the New Testament nowhere reports the presence of the apostle of the circumcision in the Western capital. The legend that he was crucified there with his head downwards[2] at his own request—as a mode of suffering more painful and ignominious than the doom of his Master[3]—is evidently the invention of an age when the pure light of evangelical religion was greatly obscured; for the apostle was too well acquainted with the truth to believe that he was at liberty to inflict on himself any unnecessary suffering. The story that he was the first bishop of Rome is a stupid fable. We know, from the Epistle of Clemens Romanus, that episcopal government was not established in the great city until long afterward. The allegation, that he occupied the see for five and twenty years, is a monstrous fabrication which the plainest historical testimony totally discredits. We have every reason to believe that he suffered martyrdom;[4] but the place of his death must perhaps forever remain a mystery.[5] According to a tradition of high antiquity, it occurred at Rome; but the statements relating to it are so unsatisfactory, so mixed up with incredible details, and presented under such suspicious circumstances,

[1] 2 Tim iv. 11.

[2] Reported by Eusebius iii. 1.

[3] The idea, that crucifixion with the head downwards aggravates the suffering, is unfounded. It vastly diminishes it by speedily causing death. But it was once considered a more dreadful form of torture, and hence we find persons thus put to death. See Euseb. viii. 8.

[4] Our Lord apparently refers to the violent death of the apostle in John xxi. 18, 19.

[5] Caius, a Roman presbyter who flourished in the early part of the third century, refers to the Vatican and the Ostian Way as the places where Peter and Paul suffered (Routh's "Reliquiæ," ii. p. 127); but this writer lived nearly a century and a half after the demise of the apostles, and almost every tale told respecting them then obtained ready credence.

that, in relation to them, we can not safely adopt any very definite conclusion.

The Second Epistle of Peter was written soon after the first, and was addressed to the same Churches.[1] The author now contemplated the near approach of death, so that the advices he here gives may be regarded as his dying instructions. "I think it meet," says he, "*as long as I am in this tabernacle*,[2] to stir you up by putting you in remembrance—knowing that *shortly* I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me."[3] It deserves notice that in this second epistle, Peter bears emphatic testimony to the character and inspiration of Paul. The Judaizing party were in the habit of pleading that they were supported by the authority of the apostle of the circumcision; and as many of these zealots were to be found in the Churches of Asia Minor,[4] such a recognition of the claims of the Apostle of the Gentiles was calculated to exert a most salutary influence. "The strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,"[5] were thus given to understand that all the true heralds of the Gospel had but "one faith"; and that any attempt to create divisions in the Church, by representing the doctrine of one inspired teacher as opposed to the doctrine of another, was most unwarrantable. The reference to Paul, to be found in the Second Epistle of Peter, is favorable to the supposition that the Apostle of the Gentiles was now dead; as, had he been still living to correct such misinterpretations, it would scarcely have been said that in all his epistles were things "hard to be understood" which "the unlearned and unstable" wrested "unto their own destruction."[6] It would seem, too, that Peter here alludes particularly to the Epistle to the Hebrews—a letter, as we have seen, addressed to Jewish Christians, and written after Paul's liberation from his first Roman imprisonment. This letter contains passages[7]

[1] 2 Pet. i. 12, iii. 1.

[2] These words suggest that the preceding letter was written not long before.

[3] 2 Pet. i. 13, 14.

[4] Gal. iv. 17, 21, vi. 12; Col. ii. 16–18.

[5] 1 Pet. i. 1.

[6] 2 Pet. iii. 16.

[7] As Heb. vi. 4–6, vii. 1–3, ix. 17.

which have often proved perplexing to interpreters; but, notwithstanding, it bears the impress of a divine original; and Peter, who maintains that all the writings of Paul were dictated by unerring wisdom, places them upon a level with "the *other Scriptures*," [1] either of the evangelists or of the Old Testament.

In the New Testament it is impossible to find a trace of either the primacy of Peter, or the supremacy of the Pope; but the facts already stated throw some light on the history of that great spiritual despotism whose seat of government has been so long established in the city of the Cæsars. At a very early period various circumstances contributed to give prominence to the Church of Rome. The epistle addressed to it contains a more complete exhibition of Christian doctrine than any other of the apostolical letters; and, in that remarkable communication, Paul expresses an earnest desire to visit a community already celebrated all over the world. Five or six of his letters, forming part of the inspired canon, were dictated in the capital of the Empire. There is every reason to believe that the Book of the Acts was written at Rome, and that the great city was also the birthplace of the Gospels of Mark and Luke. Thus, a large portion of the New Testament issued from the seat of Empire. Rome boasts that it was for some time the residence of apostles, and Paul was there for at least two years as a prisoner. Some of the most illustrious of the early converts were members of the Church of Rome; for in the days of the Apostle of the Gentiles there were disciples in "Cæsar's household." [2] And when Nero signalized himself as the first Imperial persecutor of the Christians, the Church of Rome suffered terribly from his insane and savage cruelty. Even the historian Tacitus acknowledges that the tortures to which its adherents were exposed excited the commiseration of the heathen multitude. Paul and others were cut off in his reign; and the soil of Rome absorbed the blood of many martyrs. It was not strange, therefore, that the Roman Church was soon regarded with peculiar respect by all the disciples throughout the Empire. As time passed

[1] 2 Pet. iii. 16.

[2] Phil. iv. 22.

on, it increased rapidly in numbers and in affluence; and circumstances, which properly possessed nothing more than an historic interest, began to be urged as arguments in favor of its claims to pre-eminence. At first these claims assumed no very definite form; and, at the termination of a century after the days of Paul, they amounted simply to the recognition of something like an honorary precedence. At that period it was deemed equally imprudent and ungracious to quarrel with its pretensions, especially as the community by which they were advanced was distributing its bounty all around, and was itself nobly sustaining the brunt of almost every persecution. In the course of time, the Church of Rome proceeded to challenge a substantial supremacy; and then the facts of its early history were misstated and exaggerated in accommodation to the demands of its growing ambition. It was said at first that "its faith was spoken of throughout the whole world"; it was at length contended that its creed should be universally adopted. It was admitted at an early period that, as it had enjoyed the ministrations of Paul, it should be considered an apostolic church; it was soon reported that Peter also was one of its teachers; and it was at length asserted that, as an apostle was entitled to deference from ordinary pastors, a church instructed by two of the most eminent apostles had a claim to the obedience of other churches. In process of time it was discovered that Paul was rather an inconvenient companion for the apostle of the circumcision; and Peter alone then began to be spoken of as the founder and first bishop of the Church of Rome. Strange to say, a system founded on a fiction has since sustained the shocks of many centuries. One of the greatest marvels of this "mystery of iniquity" is its tenacity of life; and did not the sure word of prophecy announce that the time should come when it would be able to boast of its antiquity, and did we not know that paganism can plead a more remote origin, we might be perplexed by its longevity. But "the vision is yet for an appointed time—at the end it shall speak and not lie. Though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry."[1]

[1] Hab. ii. 3.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PERSECUTIONS OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH, AND ITS CONDITION AT THE TERMINATION OF THE FIRST CENTURY.

JESUS CHRIST was a Jew, and it might have been expected that the advent of the most illustrious of His race, in the character of the Prophet announced by Moses, would be hailed with enthusiasm by His countrymen. But the result was far otherwise. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."[1] The Jews cried, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him";[2] and He suffered the fate of the vilest criminal. The enmity of the posterity of Abraham to our Lord did not terminate with His death; they long maintained the bad pre-eminence of being the most inveterate of the persecutors of His early followers. When the awful portents of the Passion, and the marvels of the day of Pentecost were still fresh in public recollection, their chief priests and elders threw the apostles into prison;[3] and soon afterward the pious and intrepid Stephen fell a victim to their malignity. Their infatuation was extreme; and yet it was not unaccountable. They looked, not for a crucified, but for a conquering Messiah. They imagined that the Saviour, after breaking their Roman yoke, would make Jerusalem the capital of a prosperous and powerful empire; and that all the ends of the earth would celebrate the glory of the chosen people. Their vexation, therefore, was intense when they discovered that so many of the seed of Jacob acknowledged the son of a carpenter as the Christ, and made light of the distinction between Jew and Gentile. In their case the natural

[1] John i. 11. [2] John xix. 15. [3] Acts iv. 3, v. 18.

aversion of the heart to a pure and spiritual religion was inflamed by national pride combined with mortified bigotry; and the fiendish spirit which they so frequently exhibited in their attempts to exterminate the infant Church thus admit of the most satisfactory explanation.

Many instances of their antipathy to the new sect have already been noticed. In almost every town where the missionaries of the cross appeared, the Jews "opposed themselves and blasphemed"; and magistrates speedily discovered that in no way could they more easily gain the favor of the populace than by inflicting sufferings on the Christians. Hence, as we have seen, at the time of Paul's second visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, Herod, the grandson of Herod the Great, "killed James, the brother of John, with the sword; and, because he saw it *pleased the Jews*, he proceeded further to take Peter also."[1] The apostle of the circumcision was delivered by a miracle from his grasp; but it is probable that other individuals of less note felt the effects of his severity. Even in countries far remote from their native land, the posterity of Abraham were the most bitter opponents of Christianity.[2] As there was much intercourse between Palestine and Italy, the Gospel soon found its way to the seat of government, and it would appear that some civic disturbance created in the great metropolis by the adherents of the synagogue, and intended to annoy and intimidate the new sect, prompted the Emperor Claudius, about A.D. 53, to interfere in the manner described by Luke, and to command "all Jews to depart from Rome."[3] But the hostility of the Israelites was most formidable in their

[1] Acts xii. 2, 3.

[2] See Acts xvii. 5, xviii. 12.

[3] Acts xviii. 2. Suetonius in Claud. (c. 25), says, "Judæos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit." The words Christus and Chrestus were often confounded, and it is probable that the historian here refers to some riotous proceedings among the Jews in Rome arising out of discussions relative to Christianity.' These disturbances took place about A.D. 53. Even in the beginning of the third century the Christians were sometimes called *Chrestiani*. Hence, Tertullian says, "Sed et cum perperam Chrestianus pronunciatur a vobis, nam nec nominis certa est notitia penes vos, de suavitate vel benignitate compositum est." "Apol." c. iii. See also "Ad Nationes," lib. i. c. 3.

own country, and for this, as well as other reasons, "the brethren which dwelt in Judea" specially required the sympathy of their fellow-believers throughout the Empire. When Paul appeared in the temple at the feast of Pentecost in A.D. 58, the Jews, as already related, made an attempt on his life; and when the apostle was rescued by the Roman soldiers, a conspiracy was formed for his assassination. Four years afterward, or in A.D. 62,[1] another apostle, James, surnamed the Just, who resided chiefly in Jerusalem, finished his career by martyrdom. Having, on a great public occasion, proclaimed Jesus to be the true Messiah, his fellow-citizens were so indignant that they threw him from a pinnacle of the temple. As he was still alive when he reached the ground, he was forthwith assailed with a shower of stones, and beaten to pieces with the club of a fuller.[2]

As the Christians were at first confounded with the Jews, the administrators of the Roman law, for upwards of thirty years after our Lord's death, conceded to them the religious toleration enjoyed by the seed of Abraham. But, from the beginning, "the sect of the Nazarenes" enjoyed very little of the favor of the heathen multitude. Paganism had set its mark upon all the relations of life, and had erected an idol wherever the eye could turn. It had a god of War, and a god of Peace; a god of the Sea and a god of the Wind; a god of the River, and a god of the Fountain; a god of the Field, and a god of the Barn Floor; a god of the Hearth, and a god of the Threshold; a god of the Door, and a god of the Hinges.[3] When we consider its power and prevalence in the apostolic age, we need not wonder at the declaration of Paul, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."[4]

[1] See Greswell's "Dissertations," iv. p. 233. [2] Eusebius, ii. 23.

[3] "Certi enim esse debemus, si quos latet per ignorantiam literaturæ saecularis, etiam ostiorum deos apud Romanos, Cardeam a cardinibus appellatam, et Forculum a foribus, et Limentinum a limine, et ipsum Janum a janua." Tertullian, "De Idololatria," c. 15. See also the same writer "Ad Nationes," ii. c. 10, 15; and "De Corona," 13; and Augustine's "City of God," iv. 8.

[4] 2 Tim. iii. 12. Cyprian touches on the same subject in his Treatise on the "Vanity of Idols," c. 2.

Whether the believer entered any social circle, or any place of public concourse, he was constrained in some way to protest against dominant errors; and almost exactly in proportion to his consistency and conscientiousness, he was sure to incur the dislike of the more zealous votaries of idolatry. Hence it was that the members of the Church were so soon regarded by the pagans as a morose generation instinct with hatred to the human race. In A.D. 64, when Nero, in a fit of recklessness, set fire to his capital, he soon discovered that he had, to a dangerous extent, provoked the wrath of the Roman citizens, and he attempted, in consequence, to divert the torrent of public indignation from himself by imputing the mischief to the Christians. They were already odious as the propagators of what was considered "a pernicious superstition," and the tyrant reckoned that the mob of the metropolis were prepared to believe any report to the discredit of these sectaries. But even the pagan historian who records the commencement of this first imperial persecution, and who was deeply prejudiced against the disciples of our Lord, bears testimony to the falsehood of the accusation. Nero, says Tacitus, "found wretches who were induced to confess what they were, and, on their evidence, a great multitude of Christians were convicted, not, indeed, on clear proof of their having set the city on fire, but rather on account of their hatred of the human race.[1] They were put to death amidst insults and derision. Some were covered with the skins of wild beasts, and left to be torn to pieces by dogs; others were nailed to the cross; and some,

[1] The Christians were familiar with the idea of the conflagration of the world, and there is much plausibility in the conjecture that, as they gazed on the burning city, they gave utterance to expressions which were misunderstood, and which awakened suspicion. "Some," says Dean Milman, "in the first instance, apprehended and examined, may have made acknowledgments before a passionate and astonished tribunal, which would lead to the conclusion that, in the hour of general destruction, they had some trust, some security, denied to the rest of mankind; and this exemption from common misery, if it would not mark them out, in some dark manner, as the authors of the conflagration, at all events would convict them of that hatred of the human race so often advanced against the Jews."—*Milman's History of Christianity*, ii. 37, 38.

covered over with inflammable matter, were lighted up, when the day declined, to serve as torches during the night. The Emperor lent his own gardens for the exhibition. He added the sports of the circus, and assisted in person, sometimes driving a curicle, and occasionally mixing with the rabble in his coachman's dress. At length these proceedings excited a feeling of compassion, as it was evident that the Christians were destroyed, not for the public good, but as a sacrifice to the cruelty of a single individual." [1]

Some writers have maintained that the persecution under Nero was confined to Rome; but various testimonies concur to prove that it extended to the provinces. Paul contemplates its spread throughout the Empire when he tells the Hebrews that they had "*not yet* resisted *unto blood*, striving against sin," [2] and when he exhorts them not to forsake the assembling of themselves together as they "see *the day approaching*." [3] Peter, also, as has been stated in a preceding chapter, refers to the same circumstance in his letter to the brethren "scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," when he announces "the fiery trial" which was "to try" them,[4] and when he tells them of "judgment" beginning "at the house of God." [5] If Nero enacted that the profession of Christianity was a capital offence, his law was in force throughout the Roman world; and an early ecclesiastical writer positively affirms that he was the author of such sanguinary legislation.[6] The horror with which his name was so long regarded by members of the Church in all parts of the Empire [7] strongly corroborates the statement that the attack on the disciples in the capital was only the signal for the commencement of a general persecution.

Nero died A.D. 68, and the war which involved the destruction of Jerusalem and of upwards of a million of the Jews, was already in progress. The holy city fell A.D. 70; and the Mosaic economy, which had been virtually abolished by the death

[1] Tacitus, "Annal." xv. 44. [2] Heb xii. 4. [3] Heb. x. 25.
[4] 1 Pet. iv. 12. [5] 1 Pet. iv. 17. [6] Tertullian, "Ad Nationes," i. 7.
[7] See "De Mortibus Persecutorum," c. 2, and Sulpitius Severus, lib. ii., p. 139; Edit. Leyden, 1635.

of Christ, now reached its practical termination. At the same period the prophecy of Daniel was literally fulfilled; for "the sacrifice and the oblation" were made to cease,[1] as the demolition of the temple and the dispersion of the priests put an end to the celebration of the Levitical worship. The overthrow of the metropolis of Palestine contributed in various ways to the advancement of the Christian cause. Judaism, no longer able to provide for the maintenance of its ritual, was exhibited to the world as a defunct system; its institutions, more narrowly examined by the spiritual eye, were discovered to be but types of the blessings of a more glorious dispensation; and many believers, who had hitherto adhered to the ceremonial law, discontinued its observances. Christ, forty years before, had predicted the siege and desolation of Jerusalem;[2] and the remarkable verification of a prophecy, delivered at a time when the catastrophe was exceedingly improbable, induced not a few to think more favorably of the credentials of the Gospel. In another point of view the ruin of the ancient capital of Judea proved advantageous to the Church. In the subversion of their chief city the power of the Jews sustained a shock from which it has never since recovered; and the disciples were partially delivered from the attacks of their most restless and implacable persecutors.

Much obscurity rests upon the history of the period which immediately follows the destruction of Jerusalem. Though Philip and John,[3] and perhaps one or two more of the apostles, still survived, we know almost nothing of their proceedings. After the death of Nero the Church enjoyed a season of repose, but when Domitian, in A.D. 81, succeeded to the government, the work of persecution recommenced. The new sovereign, who was of a gloomy and suspicious temper, encouraged a system of espionage; and as he imagined that the Christians fostered dangerous political designs, he treated them with the greater harshness. The Jewish calumny, that they aimed at

[1] Dan. ix. 27.

[2] Matt. xxiv. 2, 15, 16, 34; Mark xii. 2, 14, 30; Luke xxi. 6, 20, 21, 24, 32.

[3] See Euseb. iii. 31.

temporal dominion, and that they sought to set up "another king, one Jesus,"[1] had obviously produced an impression on his mind; and he accordingly sought out the nearest kinsmen of the Messiah, that he might remove these heirs of the rival dynasty. But when the two grandchildren of Jude,[2] called the brother of our Lord,[3] were conducted to Rome, and brought to his tribunal, he discovered the groundlessness of his apprehensions. The individuals who had inspired the Emperor with such anxiety, were the joint proprietors of a small farm in Palestine, which they cultivated with their own hands; and the jealous monarch at once saw that when his fears had been excited by reports of the treasonable designs of such simple and illiterate husbandmen, he had been miserably befooled. After a single interview, these poor peasants met with no farther molestation from Domitian.

Had all the disciples been in such circumstances as the grandchildren of Jude, the Gospel might have been identified with poverty and ignorance; and it would have been said that it was fitted to make way only among the dregs of the population. But it was never fairly open to this objection. From the very first it reckoned among its adherents at least a sprinkling of the wealthy, the influential, and the educated. Joseph of Arimathea, one of the primitive followers of our Lord, was "a rich man" and an "honorable counsellor";[4] Paul himself, as a scholar, stood high among his countrymen, for he had been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; and Sergius Paulus, one of the first-fruits of the mission to the Gentiles, was a Roman Proconsul.[5] In the reign of Nero the Church could boast of some illustrious converts; and the saints of "Cæsar's household" are found addressing their Christian salutations to their brethren at Philippi.[6] In the reign of Domitian the Gospel still continued to have friends among the Roman nobility. Flavius Clemens, a person of consular dignity, and the cousin of the Emperor, was put to death for his attachment

[1] Acts xvii. 7. [2] Euseb. iii. 20.
[3] Matt. xiii. 55. See Greswell's "Dissertations," ii. 114, 121, 122.
[4] Matt. xxvii. 57; Mark xv. 43. [5] Acts xiii. 7. [6] Phil. iv. 22.

to the cause of Christ;[1] and his near relative, Flavia Domitilla, for the same reason, was banished with many others to Pontia,[2] a small island off the coast of Italy used for the confinement of State prisoners.

Domitian governed the Empire fifteen years, but his persecution of the Christians was limited to the latter part of his reign. About this time the Apostle John, "for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ,"[3] was sent as an exile into Patmos, a small rocky island in the Ægæan Sea not far from the coast of Asia Minor. The tradition that he had previously issued unhurt from a caldron of boiling oil into which he had been plunged in Rome by order of the Emperor—a story for which a writer who flourished about a century afterward is the earliest voucher[4]—has been challenged as apocryphal.[5] We have no means of ascertaining the length of time during which he remained in banishment;[6] and all we know of this portion of his life is, that he had now those sublime and mysterious visions to be found in the Apocalypse. After

[1] Dio Cassius, lxvii. 14. [2] Euseb. iii. 18. [3] Rev. i. 9.

[4] Tertullian, "De Præscrip. Hæret.," c. 36.

[5] See Mosheim, Cent. i., part i., ch. 5.

[6] According to Boronius ("Annal.," ad. an. 92, 98) John was six years in Patmos, or from A.D. 92 to A.D. 98. Other writers think that he was set at liberty some time before the death of Domitian, or about A.D. 95. According to this reckoning, had he been six years in exile, he was banished A.D. 89. This conclusion derives some countenance from the "Chronicon" of Eusebius, which represents the tyrant in the eighth and ninth years of his reign, or about A.D. 89, as proscribing and putting to death very many of his subjects. If the visions of the Apocalypse were vouchsafed to John in A.D. 89, the interval between their revelation and the establishment of the Pope as a temporal prince is found to be 755—89, or exactly 666 years. See Rev. xiii. 18. There is another very curious coincidence in this case; for the interval between the fall of the Western Empire and the establishment of the Bishop of Rome as a temporal prince is 755—476=279 complete, or 280 current years, that is, 40 prophetic weeks. But it so happens that the period of human gestation is 40 weeks, and this would lead to the inference that the Man of Sin was conceived as soon as the Western Empire fell. See 2 Thess. ii. 7, 8. I am not aware that these remarkable coincidences have yet been noticed, and I therefore submit them to the consideration of the students of prophecy.

the fall of Jerusalem, as well as after he was permitted to leave Patmos, he appears to have resided chiefly in the metropolis of the Proconsular Asia; and hence some ancient writers, who flourished when the episcopal system was established, have designated him "Bishop of Ephesus."[1] But the apostle, when advanced in life, chose to be known simply by the title of "the elder";[2] and though by far the most influential minister of the district where he sojourned, he admitted his brethren to a share in the government of the Christian community. Like Peter and Paul before him, he acknowledged the other elders as his "fellow-presbyters,"[3] and, as became his age and apostolic character, he doubtless exhorted them to take heed unto themselves and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers.[4]

John was the last survivor of the apostles. He reached the advanced age of one hundred, and died about the close of the first century. He was a "Son of Thunder"[5] who long maintained the reputation of a powerful and impressive preacher; but when his strength began to give way beneath the pressure of increasing infirmities, he ceased to deliver lengthened discourses. When he addressed the congregation in extreme old age, he is reported to have simply repeated the exhortation, "Children, love one another"; and when asked why he always confined himself to the same brief admonition, he replied that "no more was necessary."[6] Such a narrative is certainly quite in harmony with the character of the beloved disciple, for he knew that love is the "bond of perfectness" and the "fulfilling of the law."

It has been thought that, toward the close of the first century, the Christian interest was in a languishing condition;[7] and the tone of the letters addressed to the Seven Churches in Asia is calculated to confirm this impression. The Church of Laodicea is described as "neither cold nor hot";[8] the Church of Sardis is admonished to "strengthen the things

[1] See Burton's "Lectures," i. 361. [2] 2 John 1; 3 John 1.
[3] 1 Pet. v. 1; Philem. 1. [4] Acts xx. 28. [5] Mark iii. 17.
[6] Jerome, "Comment. on Galatians," vi. 10.
[7] See Vitringa, "Observationes Sacræ," lib. iv., c. 7, 8. [8] Rev. iii. 16.

which remain that are ready to die";[1] and the Church of Ephesus is exhorted to "remember from whence she has fallen, and repent, and do the first works."[2] When it was known that Christianity was under the ban of a legal proscription, it was not strange that "the love of many" waxed cold; and the persecutions of Nero and Domitian had a most discouraging influence. But though the Church had to encounter the withering blasts of popular odium and imperial intolerance, it struggled through an ungenial spring; and, in almost every part of the Roman Empire, it had taken root and was beginning to exhibit tokens of a steady and vigorous growth as early as the close of the first century. The Acts and the apostolical epistles speak of the preaching of the Gospel in Palestine, Syria, Cyprus, Asia Minor, Greece, Illyricum, and Italy; and, according to traditions which we have no reason to discredit, the way of salvation was proclaimed, before the death of John, in various other countries. It is probable that Paul himself assisted in laying the foundations of the Church in Spain; at an early date there were disciples in Gaul; and, before the close of the first century, the new faith had been planted even on the distant shores of Britain.[3] Mark labored successfully as an evangelist in Alexandria, the metropolis of Egypt;[4] and Christians were soon to be found in "the parts of Libya about Cyrene,"[5] for the Jews from that district who were converted at Jerusalem by Peter's famous sermon on the day of Pentecost, did not fail, on their return home, to disseminate the precious truths by which they had been quickened and comforted. Thus, too, the Gospel soon found its way into Parthia, Media, Persia, Arabia, and Mesopotamia.[6] Various traditions[7] attest that several of the apostles travelled eastward, after their departure from the capital of Palestine.

Whilst Christianity, in the face of much obloquy, was gradu-

[1] Rev. iii. 2. [2] Rev. ii. 5.

[3] Claudia, the wife of Pudens, supposed to be mentioned 2 Tim. iv. 21, is said to have been a Briton by birth. See Fuller's "Church History of Britain," vol. i., p. 11; Edit. London, 1837.

[4] Euseb. ii. 16. [5] Acts ii. 10. [6] Acts ii. 9, 11.

[7] See in Cave's "Fathers," Bartholomew, Matthew, and Thomas.

ally attracting more and more attention, it was at the same time nobly demonstrating its power as the great regenerator of society. The religion of pagan Rome could not satisfy the wants of the soul; it could neither improve the heart nor invigorate the intellect; and it was now rapidly losing its hold on the consciences of the multitude. The high places of idolatrous worship often exercised a most demoralizing influence, as their rites were not unfrequently a wretched mixture of brutality, levity, imposture, and prostitution. Philosophy had completely failed to ameliorate the condition of man. The vices of some of its most distinguished professors were notorious; its votaries were pretty generally regarded as a class of scheming speculators; and they enjoyed neither the confidence nor the respect of the mass of the people. But, even under the most unpromising circumstances, Christianity accomplished social and spiritual changes of a very extraordinary character. The Church of Corinth was one of the least exemplary of the early Christian communities, and yet it stood on a moral eminence far above the surrounding population; and, from the roll of its own membership, it could produce cases of conversion to which nothing parallel was found in the whole history of heathendom. Paul could say to it: "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God, *and such were some of you;* but ye are washed, but ye *are sanctified*, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God."[1] Nor was this all. The Gospel proved itself sufficient to meet the highest aspirations of man. It revealed to him a Friend in heaven who "sticketh closer than a brother";[2] and, as it assured him of eternal happiness in the enjoyment of fellowship with God, it imparted to him a "peace that passeth all understanding." The Roman people witnessed a new spectacle when they saw the primitive followers of Christ expiring in the fires of martyrdom. The pagans did not so value their superstitions; but

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 9–11.

[2] Prov. xviii. 24.

here was a religion which was accounted "better than life." Well then might the flames which illuminated the gardens of Nero supply some spiritual light to the crowds who were present at the sad scene; and, in the indomitable spirit of the first sufferers, the thoughtful citizen recognized a system which was destined yet to subdue the world.

SECTION II.

THE LITERATURE AND THEOLOGY OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW TESTAMENT, ITS HISTORY, AND THE AUTHORITY OF ITS VARIOUS PARTS. THE EPISTLE OF CLEMENT OF ROME.

THE conduct of our Lord, as a religious teacher, betokened that He was more than man. Mohammed dictated the Koran, and left it behind him as a sacred book for the guidance of his followers; many others, who have established sects, have also founded a literature for their disciples; but Jesus Christ wrote nothing. The Son of God was not obliged to condescend to become His own biographer, and thus to testify of Himself. He had at His disposal the hearts and the pens of others; and He knew that His words and actions would be accurately reported to the latest generations. During His personal ministry, even His apostles were only imperfectly acquainted with His theology; but, shortly before His death, He promised in due time to disclose more fully the nature and extent of the great salvation. He said to them: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.[1] . . . . He will guide you into all truth."[2]

The resurrection poured a flood of light into the minds of

[1] John xiv. 26.

[2] John xvi. 13.

the apostles, and they forthwith commenced with unwonted boldness to proclaim the truth in all its purity and power; but no part of the evangelical history was written until upwards of twenty years after the death of our Saviour.[1] According to tradition, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke then appeared in the order in which they are now presented in our authorized version.[2] All these narratives were published several years before the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70; and as each contains our Lord's announcement of its speedy catastrophe, the exact fulfilment of so remarkable a prophecy led many to acknowledge the divine origin of the Christian religion. The Gospel of John is of a much later date, as it was written toward the conclusion of the century.

Two of the evangelists, Matthew and John, were apostles; and the other two, Mark and Luke, appear to have been of the number of the Seventy.[3] All were, therefore, fully competent to bear testimony to the facts which they record, for the Seventy had "companied" with the Twelve "all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among" them,[4] and all "were from the beginning eye-witnesses and ministers of the word."[5] These writers mention many miracles per-

[1] See Irenæus, "Adv. Hæres," iii. 1; and Euseb. vi. 14.

[2] It is probable that these three Gospels were written nearly at the same time. See Luke i. 3, 4, and Euseb. vi. 14.

[3] Origen, "Dial. de Recta in Deum Fide," sec. i., tom. i., p. 806; Edit. Delarue. Paris, 1733. See Whitby's "Preface to Luke." There is good reason to believe that the "young man" mentioned Mark xiv. 51, 52, was no other than Mark himself (Davidson's "Introduction to the New Testament," i. 139); and if so, we have thus additional evidence that the evangelist had enjoyed the advantages of our Lord's ministry. He had always been reputed the founder of the Church of Alexandria, and the testimony of Origen to the fact that he was one of the Seventy is therefore of special value; as the Alexandrian presbyter was well acquainted with the traditions of the Church of the Egyptian metropolis. The genealogies of Matthew and Luke singularly corroborate what is stated in a preceding chapter respecting the Twelve and the Seventy. Bengel remarks that Matthew "begins with *Abraham*," but Luke "makes a full recapitulation and summary of the lineage of *the whole human race*, and exhibits with that lineage the Saviour's consanguinity to all Gentiles, as well as Jews." Gnomon on Matt. i. 16.

[4] Acts i. 21. [5] Luke i. 2.

formed by Christ, and at least three of the Gospels were in general circulation whilst multitudes were still alive who are described in them as either the spectators or the subjects of His works of wonder; and yet, though the evangelists often enter most minutely into details, so that their statements, if capable of contradiction, could have been at once challenged and exposed, we do not find that any attempt was meanwhile made to impeach their accuracy. Their manner of recording the acts of the Great Teacher is characterized by remarkable simplicity; and the most acute reader in vain seeks to detect in it the slightest trace of concealment or exaggeration. Matthew artlessly confesses that he belonged to the odious class of publicans;[1] Mark tells how Peter, his friend and companion, "began to curse and to swear," and to declare that he knew not the Man;[2] Luke, who was probably one of the two brethren who journeyed to Emmaus, informs us how Jesus drew near to them on the way and upbraided them as "fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken";[3] and John honestly repudiates the pretended prediction setting forth that he himself was not to die.[4] Each evangelist mentions incidents unnoticed by the others, and thus supplies proof that he is entitled to the credit of an original and independent witness. Matthew alone gives the formula of baptism "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost";[5] Mark alone speaks of the great amazement of the people as they beheld the face of Christ on His descent from the Mount of Transfiguration;[6] Luke alone announces the appointment of the Seventy;[7] and John alone records some of those sublime discourses in which our Lord treats of the doctrine of His Sonship, of the mission of the Comforter, and of the mysterious union between Himself and His people.[8] All the evangelists direct our special attention to the scene of the crucifixion. As they proceed to describe it, they obviously feel that they are dealing with a transaction of awful import; and

[1] Matt. ix. 9, x. 3. [2] Mark xiv. 71. [3] Luke xxiv. 25.
[4] John xxi. 23. [5] Matt. xxviii. 19. [6] Mark ix. 15.
[7] Luke x. 1. [8] John xiv., xv., xvi., xvii.

they accordingly become more impressive and circumstantial. Their statements, when combined, furnish a complete and consistent narrative of the sore travail, the deep humiliation, and the dying utterances of the illustrious sufferer.

If the appointment of the Seventy indicated our Lord's intention of sending the glad tidings of salvation to the ends of the earth, there was a peculiar propriety in the selection of an individual of their number as the historian of the earliest missionary triumphs. When Luke records the wonderful success of Christianity among the Gentiles, he takes care to point out the peculiar features of the new economy; and thus it is that his narrative abounds with passages in which the doctrine, polity, and worship of the primitive disciples are illustrated or explained. It is well known that the titles of the several parts of the New Testament were prefixed to them, not by their authors, but at a subsequent period by parties who had no claim to inspiration;[1] and the book called "The Acts of the Apostles" has not been very correctly designated. It is confined almost exclusively to the acts of Peter and Paul, and it sketches only a portion of their proceedings. As its narrative terminates at the end of Paul's second year's imprisonment at Rome, it was probably written about that period. Superficial readers have objected to its information as curt and fragmentary; but the careful investigator will discover that it marks with great distinctness the most important stages in the early development of the Church.[2] It shows how Christianity spread rapidly among the Jews from the day of Pentecost to the martyrdom of Stephen; it points out how it then took root among the Gentiles; and it continues to trace its dissemination from Judea westward, till it was firmly planted by the apostle of the uncircumcision in the metropolis of the Empire.

It would appear that some of the fourteen epistles of Paul were written before any other portion of the New Testament, for we have already seen[3] that the greater number of

[1] See Horne's "Introduction," ii. 173. Sixth Edition.

[2] See Baumgarten on Acts vii., viii., ix., xiii.

[3] Period i., sec. i., chap. 7, 8, 9.

them were transmitted to the parties to whom they are addressed during the time over which the Acts of the Apostles extend; but though Luke makes no mention of these letters, his account of the travels of their author throws considerable light on the question of their chronology. Guided by statements which he supplies, and by evidence contained in the documents themselves, we have endeavored to point out the order of their composition. They are not placed chronologically in the New Testament. The present arrangement is, however, of great antiquity, as it can be traced to the beginning of the fourth century;[1] and it is made on the principle that the Churches addressed should be classed according to their relative importance. The Church of Rome at an early period was recognized as the most influential, and hence the Epistle to the Romans stands at the head of the collection. The Church of Corinth ranked next, and accordingly the Epistles to the Corinthians occupy the second place. The letters to the Churches are followed by those to individuals, that is, to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon; and the Epistle to the Hebrews is put last, because it is anonymous. Some have contended that this letter was composed by Barnabas; others have ascribed it to Clement, or Luke, or Silas, or Apollos; but, though Paul has not announced his name, the external and internal evidences concur to prove that he was its author.[2]

"Every word of God is pure,"[3] but the word of man is often deceitful; and nowhere are his fallibility and ignorance revealed more conspicuously than in his appendages to Scripture. Even the titles prefixed to the writings of the apostles and evangelists are redolent of superstition; for no satisfactory reason can be given why the designation of *saint*[4] has

[1] Horne, iv. 359.

[2] See Wordsworth "On the Canon," Lectures viii. ix. [3] Prov. xxx. 5.

[4] This designation is not found in the most ancient manuscripts. Thus, in the very ancient "Recension of the Four Gospels in Syriac," recently edited by Dr. Cureton, we have simply—"Gospel of Mark"—"Gospel of John," etc. See p. 6, Preface. See also any ordinary edition of the Greek Testament.

been bestowed on Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, when it is withheld, not only from Moses and Isaiah, but also from such eminently holy ministers as Timothy and Titus. The postscripts to the epistles of Paul have been added by transcribers, and are also calculated to mislead. Thus, the Epistle to the Galatians is said to have been "written from Rome," though it is now generally acknowledged that Paul was not in the capital of the Empire till after that letter was dictated. The first Epistle to Timothy is dated "from Laodicea, which is the chiefest city of Phrygia Pacatiana"; but it is well known that Phrygia was not divided into Phrygia Prima, or Pacatiana, and Phrygia Secunda until the fourth century.[1] It is stated at the end of another epistle that it was "written to Titus, ordained the first Bishop of the Church of the Cretians"; but, as the letter itself demonstrates, Paul did not intend that Titus should remain permanently in Crete,[2] and it can be shown that, for centuries afterward, such a dignitary as "the Bishop of the Church of the Cretians" was utterly unknown.

The seven letters written by James, Peter, Jude, and John, are called General or Catholic epistles. The Epistle of James was addressed "to the twelve tribes scattered abroad" probably in A.D. 61, and its author survived its publication little more than twelve months.[3] Peter, as we have seen, wrote his two epistles only a short time before his martyrdom.[4] The Epistle of Jude is the production of a later period, as it contains quotations from the Second Epistle of Peter.[5] The exact dates of the Epistles of John can not now be discovered, but they supply internal proof that they were written toward the close of the first century.[6]

According to some, the Apocalypse, or Revelation of John, was drawn up before the destruction of Jerusalem, and in the

[1] Horne, ii. 174. [2] Titus iii. 12.

[3] Some, however, assign to it a much earlier date. See Davidson's "Introduction to the New Testament," iii. 320.

[4] See Period i., sec. i., chap. 10, p. 143.

[5] See Wordsworth "On the Canon," p. 273.

[6] See Davidson's "Introduction," iii. 464, 491.

time of the Emperor Nero; but the arguments in support of so early an origin are very unsatisfactory. Ancient writers[1] attest that it was written in the reign of Domitian toward the close of the first century, and the truth of this statement is established by various collateral evidences.

The divine authority of the four Gospels and of the Acts of the Apostles was, from their first appearance, universally acknowledged in the ancient Church.[2] These books were publicly read in the religious assemblies of the primitive Christians, and were placed on a level with the Old Testament Scriptures.[3] The epistles of Paul occupied an equally honorable position.[4] In the second and third centuries the Epistle to the Hebrews was not, indeed, received among the sacred books by the Church of Rome;[5] but at an earlier period its inspiration was acknowledged by the Christians of the great city, for it is quoted as the genuine work of the Apostle Paul by an eminent Roman pastor who flourished in the first century.[6] The authority of two of the most considerable of the Catholic epistles — the First Epistle of Peter and the First Epistle of John—was never questioned;[7] but, for a time, there were churches which doubted the claims of the five others to be ranked amongst "the Scriptures."[8] The multitude of spurious writings which were then abroad suggested to the disciples the necessity of caution, and hence suspicions arose in certain cases where they were destitute of foundation. But these suspicions, which never were entertained by more than a minority of the churches, gradually passed away; and at

[1] Irenæus, v. 30. Euseb. iii. 18.

[2] See Wordsworth "On the Canon," pp. 157, 160, 249; and Euseb. iii. 25.

[3] Justin Martyr, ap. i. 67.

[4] 2 Pet. iii. 16.

[5] Wordsworth "On the Canon," p. 205.

[6] "The allusions to the Epistle to the Hebrews are so numerous that it is not too much to say that it was wholly transfused into Clement's mind."— *Westcott on the Canon*, p. 32. See also Euseb. iii. 38.

[7] Wordsworth "On the Canon," p. 249.

[8] "The word (γραφή) translated *Scripture*, which properly means simply a *writing*, occurs fifty times in the New Testament; and in all these fifty places, it is applied to the writings of the Old and New Testament, and *to no other*."— *Wordsworth*, pp. 185, 186.

length, toward the close of the fourth century the whole of what are now called the Catholic epistles were received, by unanimous consent, as inspired documents.[1] The Apocalypse was acknowledged to be a divine revelation as soon as it appeared; and its credit remained unimpeached till the question of the Millennium began to create discussion. Its authenticity was then challenged by some parties who took an interest in the controversy; but it still continued to be regarded as a part of Holy Scripture by the majority of Christians, and there is no book of the New Testament in behalf of which a title to a divine original can be established by more conclusive and ample evidence.[2]

We thus see that, with the exception of a few short epistles which some hesitated to accredit, the New Testament, in the first century, was acknowledged as the Word of God by all the Apostolical Churches. Its various parts were not then included in a single volume; and as a considerable time elapsed before copies of every one of them were universally disseminated, it is not to be thought extraordinary if the appearance of a letter, several years after it was written, and in quarters where it had been previously unknown, awakened suspicion or scepticism. But the slender objections, advanced under such circumstances, gradually vanished before the light of additional evidence; and it may safely be asserted that the whole of the documents, now known as the Scriptures of the New Testament, were received, as parts of a divine revelation, by an overwhelming majority of the early Christians. The present division into chapters and verses was introduced at a period comparatively recent;[3] but stated portions of the

[1] Wordsworth, pp. 249, 250.

[2] See Davidson's "Introduction," iii. 540–550.

[3] See Horne's "Introduction," ii. 168. The author of the present division into chapters is said to have been Hugo de Sancto Caro, a learned writer who flourished about the middle of the thirteenth century. The New Testament was first divided into verses by Robert Stephens in 1551. The Geneva New Testament, published in 1557, was the first English version into which these divisions of Stephens were introduced. The Church of Rome has adopted this Protestant arrangement. Stephens died at Geneva in 1559.

writings of the apostles and evangelists were read by the primitive disciples at their religious meetings, and for the direction of the reader, as well as for the facility of reference, the arrangement was soon notified in the manuscripts by certain marks of distinction.[1] It is well known that in the ancient Churches persons of all classes and conditions were encouraged and required to apply themselves to the study of the sacred records; that even children were made acquainted with the Scriptures;[2] and that the private perusal of the inspired testimonies was considered an important means of individual edification. All were invited and stimulated by special promises to meditate upon the mysterious, as well as the plain, passages of the book of Revelation. "Blessed," says the Apostle John, "is he that readeth, and *they that hear the words of this prophecy*, and keep those things which are written therein."[3]

The original manuscripts of the New Testament, which from the first were accessible to comparatively few, have all long since disappeared; and it is now impossible to tell whether they were worn away by the corroding tooth of time, or destroyed in seasons of persecution. Copies of them were rapidly multiplied; and though heathen adversaries displayed no small amount of malice and activity, it was soon found impossible to effect their annihilation. It was not necessary that the apostolic autographs[4] should be preserved forever, as the records, when transcribed, still retained the best and clearest proofs of their inspiration. They did not require even the imprimatur of the Church, for they exhibited in every page the stamp of divinity; and as soon as they were published, they commended themselves by the internal tokens of their heavenly lineage to the acceptance of the faithful. "The Word of God is quick and powerful," and every one who peruses the New Testament in a right spirit feels that it has emanated from the Searcher of hearts. It speaks to the con-

[1] Horne ii. 169.

[2] John v. 39; 2 Tim. iii. 15.

[3] Rev. i. 3. See also 2 Peter i. 19.

[4] Paul's epistles were often written with the hand of another. See Rom xvi. 22; 2 Thess. iii. 17.

science; it has all the simplicity and majesty of a divine communication; it enlightens the understanding; and it converts the soul. No mere man could have invented such a character as the Saviour it reveals; no mere man could have contrived such a system of mercy as that which it announces. The New Testament is always on the side of whatsoever is just, and honest, and lovely, and of good report; it glorifies God; it alarms the sinner; it comforts the saint. "The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times." [1]

The excellence of the New Testament is displayed to singular advantage when contrasted with those uninspired productions of nearly the same date which emanated from the companions of the apostles. The only genuine document of this nature which has come down to us, and which belongs to the first century,[2] is an epistle to the Corinthians. It was prepared immediately after the Domitian persecution, or about A.D. 96,[3] with a view to heal certain divisions which had sprung up in the religious community to which it is addressed; and, though written in the name of the Church of Rome, there is no reason to doubt that it is the composition of Clement, who was then at the head of the Roman presbytery. The advice which it administers is most judicious; and the whole letter breathes the peaceful spirit of a devoted Christian pastor. But it contains passages which furnish conclusive evidence that it has no claims whatever to inspiration; and its illustration of the doctrine of the resurrection is in itself more than sufficient to demonstrate that it could not have been dictated under any supernatural guidance. "There is," says Clement,[4] "a certain bird called the phœnix. Of this there is never but one at a time, and that lives five hundred

[1] Ps. xii. 6.

[2] The epistle to Diognetus may have been written in the first century, but it is commonly referred to a later date.

[3] He speaks of the Church of Corinth at the time as "most ancient" (§ 47), and refers to the Domitian persecution. See Euseb. iii. 15, 16.

[4] Tertullian also illustrates the resurrection by the story of the phœnix, "De Resurrec. Carn." c. 13.

years: and when the time of its dissolution draws near that it must die, it makes itself a nest of frankincense, and myrrh, and other spices, into which, when its time is fulfilled, it enters and dies. But its flesh putrefying breeds a certain worm which, being nourished with the juice of the dead bird, brings forth feathers; and when it is grown to a perfect state, it takes up the nest in which the bones of its parent are, and carries it from Arabia into Egypt to a city called Heliopolis; and flying in open day, in the sight of all men, lays it upon the altar of the Sun, and so returns from whence it came. The priests then search into the records of the time, and find that it returned precisely at the end of five hundred years."[1]

In point of education the authors of the New Testament did not generally enjoy higher advantages than Clement; and yet, writing "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," they were prevented from giving currency, even in a single instance, to such a story as this fable of the phœnix. All their statements will be found to be true, whether tried by the standard of mental or of moral science, of geography, or of natural history. The theology which they teach is at once sound and genial; and those by whom it is appreciated can testify that whilst it invigorates and elevates the intellect, it also pacifies the conscience and purifies the heart.

[1] Clement's "Epistle to the Corinthians," § 25. The fragment of the second epistle is not generally considered genuine.

CHAPTER II.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

THE same system of doctrine is inculcated throughout the whole of the sacred volume. Though upwards of fifteen hundred years elapsed between the commencement and the completion of the canon of Scripture; though its authors were variously educated; though they were distinguished as well by their tastes as by their temperaments; and though they lived in different countries and in different ages, all the parts of the volume called the Bible exhibit the clearest indications of unity of design. Each writer testifies to the "one faith," and each contributes something to its illustration. Thus it is that even at the present day every book in the canon is "good to the use of edifying." The announcements made to our first parents will continue to impart spiritual refreshment to their posterity of the latest generations; and the believer can now give utterance to his devotional feelings in the language of the Psalms, as appropriately as did the worshipper of old, when surrounded by all the types and shadows of the Levitical ceremonial.

The Old Testament is related to the New as the dawn to the day, or the prophecy to its accomplishment. Jesus appeared merely to consummate the Redemption which "the promises made to the fathers" had announced. "Think not," said He, "that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."[1] The mission of our Lord explained many things which had long remained mysterious; and, in allusion to the great amount of fresh informa-

[1] Matt. v. 17.

tion thus communicated, He is said to have "brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."[1]

When the apostles first became disciples of the Son of Mary, their views were certainly very indefinite and circumscribed. Acting under the influence of strong attachment to the Wonderful Personage who exhibited such wisdom and performed so many mighty works, they promptly obeyed the invitation to come and follow Him; and yet, when required to tell who was this Great Teacher to whom they were attached by the charm of such a holy yet mysterious fascination, they could do little more than declare their conviction that JESUS was THE CHRIST.[2] They knew, indeed, that the Messiah, or the Great Prophet, was to be a Redeemer and a King;[3] but they did not understand how their lowly Master was to establish His title to such high offices.[4] Though they "looked for redemption" and "waited for the kingdom of God,"[5] there was much that was vague as well as much that was visionary in their notions of the Redemption and the Kingdom. We may well suppose that the views of the multitude were still less correct and perspicuous. Some expected Christ as a prophet, to decide the ecclesiastical controversies of the age;[6] others anticipated that, as Redeemer, He would deliver His countrymen from Roman domination;[7] whilst others again cherished the hope that, as a King, He would erect in Judea a mighty monarchy.[8] The expectation of the establishment of His temporal dominion was long entertained even by those who had been taught to regard Him as a spiritual Saviour.[9]

During the interval between the resurrection and ascension the apostles profited greatly by the teaching of our Lord. "Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures,"[10] showing that all things were "fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the

[1] 2 Tim. i. 10.
[2] Matt. xvi. 16; John i. 41.
[3] Luke xxiv. 19, 21; John i. 49.
[4] Matt. xvi. 21, 22; John xii. 34.
[5] Mark xv. 43; Luke ii. 38.
[6] John iv. 20–25.
[7] John xix. 12.
[8] Matt. ii. 2, 3, xx. 21; John vi. 15.
[9] Acts i. 6.
[10] Luke xxiv. 45.

Prophets, and in the Psalms"[1] concerning Him. The true nature of Christ's Kingdom was now fully disclosed to them; they saw that the history of Jesus was embodied in the ancient predictions; and their ideas were brought into harmony with the revelations of the Old Testament. On the day of Pentecost they received additional illumination; and thus, maturely qualified for the duties of their apostleship, they began to publish the great salvation. Even afterward their knowledge continued to expand; for they had yet to be taught that the Gentiles also were heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven;[2] that uncircumcised believers were to be admitted to all the privileges of ecclesiastical fellowship;[3] and that the ceremonial law had ceased to be obligatory.[4]

We do not require, however, to trace the progress of enlightenment in the minds of the original heralds of the Gospel, that we may ascertain the doctrine of the Apostolic Church; for in the New Testament we have a complete and unerring exposition of the faith delivered to the saints. We have seen that, with a few comparatively trivial exceptions, all the documents dictated by the apostles and evangelists were at once recognized as inspired;[5] so that in them, combined with the Jewish Scriptures, we have a perfect ecclesiastical statute-book. The doctrine set forth in the New Testament was cordially embraced in the first century by all genuine believers. And it can not be too emphatically inculcated that *the written Word* was of paramount authority among the primitive Christians. The Israelites had traditions which they professed to have received from Moses, but our Lord repudiated these fables and asserted the supremacy of the Book of Inspiration.[6] In His own discourses He honored the Scriptures by continually quoting from them,[7] and He commanded the Jews to refer to them as the only sure arbiters of His pretensions.[8] The apostles followed His example. More than one-half of the sermon preached by Peter on the day of Pen-

[1] Luke xxiv. 44. [2] Acts x. 34, 35. [3] Acts xi. 3, 17.
[4] Heb. x. 1, 14, 18. [5] Period i., sec. ii., chap. 1. [6] Mark vii. 7–9.
[7] Matt. iv. 1–10, xii. 3, 5, 7; Mark xii. 26. [8] John v. 39.

tecost consisted of passages selected from the Old Testament.[1] The Scriptures, too, inculcate not only their claims as standards of ultimate appeal, but also their sufficiency to meet all the wants of the faithful; for they profess to be "able to make wise unto salvation,"[2] and to be "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be *perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*"[3] The sacred records teach, with equal clearness, their own plenary inspiration. Each writer has peculiarities of style, and yet each uses language which the Holy Spirit dictates. In the New Testament a single word is more than once made the basis of an argument,[4] and doctrines are repeatedly established by a critical examination of particular forms of expression.[5] When statements advanced by Moses or David or Isaiah are adduced, they are often prefaced with the intimation that thus "the Holy Ghost saith,"[6] or thus "it is spoken of the Lord."[7] The apostles plainly aver that they employ language of infallible authority. "We speak," says Paul, "*in the words* which the Holy Ghost teacheth."[8] "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."[9]

It is of unutterable importance to know that the Scriptures are the very word of the Lord, for they relate to our highest interests; and were they of less authority, they could not command our entire confidence. The momentous truths which they reveal are in every way worthy to be recorded in memorials given by inspiration of God. Under the ancient economy the sinner was assured of a Redeemer;[10] and intimations were not wanting that his deliverance would be wrought out in a way fitted to excite the wonder of the whole intelligent creation;[11] but the New Testament lifts the veil, and sheds a glorious radiance over the revelation of mercy. According to the doctrine of the Apostolic Church the human race are at

[1] Acts ii. 14–36. [2] 2 Tim. iii. 15. [3] 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.
[4] Matt. xxii. 43, 45; Gal. iii. 16; Heb. ii. 8, 11.
[5] John x. 34, 35; Heb. viii. 13. [6] Acts xxviii. 25; Heb. iii. 7.
[7] Heb. i. 1, 2; Matt. i. 22, ii. 15. [8] 1 Cor. ii. 13. [9] 2 Tim. iii. 16.
[10] Gen. iii. 15; Ps. cxxx. 7, 8; Dan. ix. 24. [11] Ps. xcviii. 1–4; Isa. ix. 6.

once "guilty before God,"[1] and "dead in trespasses and sins";[2] and as Christ in the days of His flesh called forth Lazarus from the tomb, and made him a monument of His wonder-working power, so by His word He still awakens dead sinners and calls them with an holy calling, that they may be trophies of His grace throughout all eternity. And as the restoration of hearing is an evidence of the restoration of life, so the reception of the word by faith is a sure token of spiritual vitality. "*He that heareth my word*," said Christ, "and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but *is passed from death unto life*."[3]

Faith is to the soul of the believer what the living organs are to his body. It is the ear, the eye, the hand, and the palate of the spiritual man. By faith he hears the voice of the Son of God;[4] by faith he sees Him who is invisible;[5] by faith he looks unto Jesus;[6] by faith he lays hold upon the Hope set before him;[7] and by faith he tastes that the Lord is gracious.[8] All the promises are addressed to faith; and by faith they are appropriated and enjoyed. By faith the believer is pardoned,[9] sanctified,[10] sustained,[11] and comforted.[12] Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;[13] for it enables us to anticipate the happiness of heaven, and to realize the truth of God.

The word of the Lord is to the faith of the Christian what the material world is to his bodily senses. As the eye gazes with delight on the magnificent scenery of creation, the eye of faith contemplates with joy unspeakable the exceedingly great and precious promises. And as the eye can look with pleasure only on those objects which it sees, faith can rest with satisfaction only on those things which are written in the book of God's testimony. It has been "written that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing we might have life through his name."[14]

[1] Rom. iii. 19. [2] Eph. ii. 1. [3] John v. 24. [4] Rev. iii. 20.
[5] Heb. xi. 27. [6] Heb. xii. 2. [7] Heb. vi. 18. [8] 1 Pet. ii. 3.
[9] Rom. v. 1. [10] Acts xv. 9. [11] 1 John v. 4.
[12] Rom. v. 2. [13] Heb. xi. 1. [14] John xx. 31.

The Scriptures are not to be regarded as a storehouse of facts, promises, and precepts, without relation or dependency; but a volume containing a collection of glorious truths, all forming one great and well-balanced system. Every part of revelation refers to the Redeemer; and His earthly history is the key by means of which its various announcements may be illustrated and harmonized. In the theology of the New Testament Christ is indeed the "All in all." In addition to many other illustrious titles which He bears, He is represented as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,"[1] "the End of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth,"[2] "the Head of the Church,"[3] "the King of kings,"[4] and "the Hope of glory."[5] During His public ministry He performed miracles such as had been previously understood to mark the peculiar energy of Omnipotence; for He opened the eyes of the blind;[6] He walked upon the waves of the sea;[7] He made the storm a calm;[8] and he declared to man what was His thought.[9] In his capacity of Saviour He exercises attributes which are essentially divine; as He redeems from all iniquity,[10] and pardons sin,[11] and sanctifies the Church,[12] and opens the heart,[13] and searches the reins.[14] Had Jesus of Nazareth failed to assert His divine dignity, the credentials of His mission would have been incomplete, for the Messiah of the Old Testament is no other than the Monarch of the universe. Nothing can be more obvious than that the ancient prophets invest Him with the various titles and attributes of Deity. He is called "the Lord,"[15] "Jehovah,"[16] and "God";[17] He is represented as the object of worship;[18] He is set forth as the King's Son

[1] John i. 29. [2] Rom. x. 4. [3] Eph. v. 23. [4] Rev. xvii. 14.
[5] Col. i. 27. [6] Ps. cxlvi. 8, compared with John ix. 32, 33.
[7] Job ix. 8, compared with Matt. xiv. 25.
[8] Ps. cvii. 29, compared with Luke viii. 24.
[9] Amos iv. 13, compared with Matt. xii. 25, and John ii. 24, 25.
[10] Tit. ii. 14. [11] Mark ii. 5–10. [12] Eph. v. 26.
[13] Acts xvi. 14; Luke xxiv. 45 [14] Rev. ii. 23. [15] Mal. iii. 1.
[16] Isa. xl. 3, and vi. 1, compared with John xii. 38–41.
[17] Isa. xl. 3, 9; Ps. xlv. 5. [18] Ps. ii. 12.

who shall daily be praised;[1] and He is exhibited as an Almighty and Eternal Friend in whom all that put their trust are blessed.[2]

During the public ministry of our Lord the Twelve were not altogether ignorant of His exalted dignity;[3] and yet the most decisive attestations to His Godhead occur after His resurrection.[4] When the apostles surveyed the humble individual with whom they were in daily intercourse, it is not extraordinary that their faith faltered, and that their powers of apprehension failed, as they pondered the prophecies relating to His advent. When they attempted closely to grapple with the amazing truths there presented to their contemplation, and thought of "the Word made flesh," well might they be overwhelmed with a feeling of giddy and dubious wonder. Even after the resurrection had illustrated so marvellously the announcements of the Old Testament, the disciples still continued to regard them with a species of bewilderment; and our Saviour himself found it necessary to point out in detail their meaning and their fulfilment. "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."[5] The whole truth as to the glory of His person now flashed upon their minds, and henceforth they do not scruple to apply to Him all the lofty titles bestowed of old on the Messiah. The writers of the New Testament say expressly that "Jesus is the Lord,"[6] and "God blessed forever";[7] they describe believers as trusting in Him,[8] as serving Him,[9] and as calling upon His name;[10] and they tell of saints and angels uniting in the celebration of His praise.[11] Such testimonies amply illustrate their ideas of His dignity.

[1] Ps. lxxii. 15.

[2] Ps. ii. 12, compared with Ps. cxlvi. 3, 5, and Isa. xxvi. 4.

[3] John i. 49; Matt. xvi. 16, 17. [4] Such as John xx. 28, xxi. 17.

[5] Luke xxiv. 27. [6] 1 Cor. xii. 3. [7] Rom. ix. 5.

[8] Eph. i. 12, 13; Matt. xii. 21. [9] Col. iii. 24.

[10] Acts ix. 14; 1 Cor. i. 2.

[11] Rev. v. 11–13. Though modern criticism has shaken the credit of some passages usually quoted in support of the Deity of Christ, such as 1 Tim. iii. 16, it has discovered others equally strong not now in the received text.

Divine incarnations were recognized in the heathen mythology, so that the Gentiles could not well object to the doctrine of the assumption of our nature by the Son of God; but Christianity asserts its immense superiority to paganism in its account of the design of the union of humanity and Deity in the person of the Redeemer. According to the poets of Greece and Rome, the gods often adopted material forms for the vilest of purposes: but the Lord of glory was made partaker of our flesh and blood,[1] to satisfy the claims of eternal justice, and purchase for us a happy and immortal inheritance. In the cross of Christ sin appears "exceedingly sinful," and the divine law has been more signally honored by His sufferings than if all men of all generations had forever groaned under its chastisements. The Jewish ritual made the apostles perfectly familiar with the doctrine of atonement; but they were "slow of heart to believe" that their Master was Himself the Mighty Sacrifice represented in the types of the Mosaic ceremonial.[2] The evangelist informs us that He expounded this subject after His resurrection, showing them that "thus it behoved Christ to suffer."[3] Still the crucifixion of the Saviour was to multitudes a "rock of offence." The ambitious Israelite, who expected the Messiah to go forth conquering and to conquer, and make Palestine the seat of universal empire, could not brook the thought that the Great Deliverer was to die; and the learned Greek, who looked upon all religion with leering scepticism, was prepared to ridicule the idea of the burial of the Son of God; but the very circumstance which aroused such prejudices, suggested to those possessed of spiritual discernment discoveries of stupendous grandeur. Justice demands the punishment of transgressors; mercy pleads for their forgiveness; holiness requires the execution of God's threatenings; goodness insists on the fulfilment of His promises; and all these attributes are harmonized

See Lachmann's text of Col. ii. 2, and 1 Pet. iii. 15; and Tregelles on John i. 18, and his "Additions" to the 4th vol. of Horne's "Introduction," pp. 780–81, London, 1860. See also the Revised version of the New Testament.

[1] Heb. ii. 14. [2] Matt. xvi. 22. [3] Luke xxiv. 46.

in the doctrine of a Saviour sacrificed. God is "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."[1] The Son of Man "by His own blood obtained eternal redemption"[2] for His Church; "mercy and truth meet together" in His expiation; and His death is thus the central point to which the eye of faith is now directed. Hence Paul says, "We preach *Christ crucified*, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God."[3]

The doctrine of the Apostolic Church is simple and consistent, as well as spiritual and sublime. The way of redemption it discloses is not an extempore provision of Supreme benevolence called forth by an unforeseen contingency, but a plan devised from eternity, and fitted to display all the divine perfections in most impressive combination. Whilst it recognizes the voluntary agency of man, it upholds the sovereignty of God. Jehovah graciously secures the salvation of every heir of the promises by both contriving and carrying out all the arrangements of the "well-ordered covenant." His Spirit quickens the dead soul, and works in us "to will and to do of his good pleasure."[4] "The Father hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved."[5]

The theological term Trinity was not in use in the days of the apostles, but it does not follow that the doctrine so designated was then unknown; for the New Testament clearly indicates that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost exist in the unity of the Godhead.[6] Neither can it be inferred from the absence of any fixed formula of doctrine that the early followers of our Lord did not all profess the same sentiments, for they had "one Lord, one faith, one baptism."[7] The docu-

[1] Rom. iii. 26. [2] Heb. ix. 12. [3] 1 Cor. i. 24. [4] Phil. ii. 13.
[5] Eph. i. 4–6. [6] Matt. xxviii. 19; John x. 30, xv. 26. [7] Eph. iv. 5.

ment commonly called "the Apostles' Creed" is certainly of very great antiquity, but no part of it proceeded from those to whom it is attributed by its title;[1] and its rather bald and dry detail of facts and principles obviously betokens a decline from the simple and earnest spirit of primitive Christianity. Though the early converts, before baptism, made a declaration of their faith,[2] there is in the sacred volume no authorized summary of doctrinal belief; and in this fact we have a proof of the far-seeing wisdom by which the New Testament was dictated; as heresy is ever changing its features, and a test of orthodoxy, suited to the wants of one age, would not exclude the errorists of another. It has been left to the existing rulers of the Church to frame such ecclesiastical symbols as circumstances require; and they are bound to search the Scriptures that they may be prepared to grapple successfully with errors as they appear.

It may be added that the doctrine of the Apostolic Church is eminently practical. The great object of the mission of Jesus was to "save his people from their sins";[3] and the tendency of all the teachings of the New Testament is to promote sanctification. But the holiness of the Gospel is not a shy asceticism which sits in a cloister in moody melancholy, so that its light never shines before men; but a generous consecration of the heart to God, which leads us to confess Christ in the presence of gainsayers, and which prompts us to delight in works of benevolence. The true Christian should be happy as well as holy; for the knowledge of the highest truth is connected with the purest enjoyment. This "wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it."[4] The Apostle Paul, when a prisoner at Rome, had comforts to which Nero was an utter stranger. Even then he could say, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry

[1] See Bingham, iii. 323–327.

[2] Acts viii. 37; 1 Pet. iii. 21.

[3] Matt. i. 21.

[4] Prov. viii. 11.

both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."[1] When all around the believer is dark and discouraging, there is sunshine in his soul. There are no joys comparable to the joys of a Christian. They are the gifts of the Spirit of God, and the first-fruits of eternal blessedness; they are serene and heavenly, solid and satisfying.

[1] Phil. iv. 11–14.

CHAPTER III.

THE HERESIES OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

THE Greek word translated *heresy*[1] in our authorized version of the New Testament, did not primarily convey an unfavorable idea. It simply denoted a *choice* or *preference*. It was often employed to indicate the adoption of a particular class of philosophical sentiments; and thus it came to signify a *sect* or *denomination*. Hence we find ancient writers speaking of the *heresy* of the Stoics, the *heresy* of the Epicureans, and the *heresy* of the Academics. The Jews who used the Greek language did not consider that the word necessarily reflected on the party it was intended to describe; and Josephus, who was himself a Pharisee, accordingly discourses of the three heresies of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes.[2] The Apostle Paul, when speaking of his own history prior to his conversion, says, that "after the strictest heresy" of his religion he lived a Pharisee.[3] We learn, too, from the book of the Acts, that the early Christians were known as "the heresy of the Nazarenes."[4] But very soon the word began to be employed to denote something which the Gospel could not sanction; and accordingly, in the Epistle to the Galatians, heresies are enumerated among the works of the flesh.[5] It is not difficult to explain why Christian writers at an early date were led to attach such a meaning to a term which had hitherto been understood to imply nothing

[1] "Αἱρεσις autem Græcè, ab electione dicitur: quòd scilicet eam sibi unusquisque eligat disciplinam, quam putat esse meliorem."—*Hieronymus in Epist. ad Galat.* c. 5. See also Tertullian, "De Præscrip." c. 6.

[2] "Life," § 2; "Antiq." xiii. 5, 9.

[3] Acts xxvi. 5.

[4] Acts xxiv. 5.

[5] Gal. v. 20.

reprehensible. The New Testament teaches us to regard an erroneous theology as sinful, and traces every deviation from "the one faith" of the Gospel to the corruption of a darkened intellect.[1] It declares, "He that believeth not is *condemned already*, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God; and this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, *because their deeds were evil*."[2] The most ancient ecclesiastical authors described all classes of unbelievers, sceptics, and innovators, under the general name of heretics. Persons who in matters of religion made a *false choice*, of whatever kind, were viewed as "vainly puffed up by a fleshly mind," or as under the influence of some species of mental depravity.

Heresy, in the first century, denoted every deviation from the Christian faith. Pagans and Jews, as well as professors of apocryphal forms of the Gospel, were called heretics.[3] But in the New Testament our attention is directed chiefly to errorists who in some way disturbed the Church, and adulterated the doctrine taught by our Lord and His apostles. Paul refers to such characters when he says, "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject";[4] and Peter also alludes to them when he speaks of false teachers who were to appear and "privily bring in damnable heresies."[5]

The earliest corrupters of the Gospel were unquestionably those who endeavored to impose the observance of the Mosaic law on the converted Gentiles. Their proceedings were condemned in the Council of Jerusalem, mentioned in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles; and Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, subsequently exposed their infatuation. But evangelical truth had more to fear from dilution with the speculations of the Jewish and pagan literati.[6] The apostle

[1] Eph. iv. 17, 18; Col. i. 13. [2] John iii. 18, 19.

[3] Mosheim has overlooked this fact, and has, in consequence, been betrayed into some false criticism when treating on this subject.

[4] Titus iii. 10. [5] 2 Pet. ii. 1.

[6] Every one acquainted with the works of Philo Judæus is aware that Jewish literature was now largely impregnated with pagan philosophy.

had this evil in view when he said to the Colossians, "Beware, lest any man spoil you through *philosophy* and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after *the rudiments of the world*, and not after Christ."[1] He likewise emphatically attested the danger to be apprehended from it when he addressed to his own son in the faith the impassioned admonition, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and *oppositions of science* falsely so called."[2]

There is no reason to doubt that the "science" or "philosophy" of which Paul was so anxious that the disciples should beware, was the same which was afterward so well known by the designation of *Gnosticism*. The second century was the period of its most vigorous development; and it then, for a time, almost engrossed the attention of the Church; but it was already beginning to exert a pernicious influence, and it is therefore noticed by the vigilant apostle. Whilst it acknowledged, to a certain extent, the authority of the Christian revelation, it also borrowed largely from Platonism; and, in a spirit of accommodation to the system of the Athenian sage, it rejected some of the leading doctrines of the Gospel. Plato never entertained the sublime conception of the creation of all things out of nothing by the word of the Most High. He held that matter is essentially evil, and that it is contaminating.[3] The false teachers who disturbed the Church in the apostolic age adopted both these views; and the errors which they propagated, and of which the New Testament takes notice, flowed from their unsound philosophy by direct and necessary consequence. As a right understanding of certain passages of Scripture depends on an acquaintance with their system, it will here be expedient to advert somewhat more particularly to a few of its peculiar features.

The Gnostics alleged that the present world owes neither its origin nor its arrangement to the Supreme God. They maintained that its constituent parts have been always in ex-

[1] Col. ii. 8. [2] 1 Tim. vi. 20.

[3] See Burton's "Inquiry into the Heresies of the Apostolic Age," pp. 314, 315. Also Mosheim's "Dissertation" appended to Cudworth, iii. 171.

istence; and that, as the great Father of Lights would have been contaminated by contact with corrupt matter, the visible frame of things was fashioned, without His knowledge, by an inferior Intelligence. These principles derogated from the glory of Jehovah. By ascribing to matter an independent and eternal existence they impugned the doctrine of God's Omnipotent Sovereignty; and by representing it as regulated without His sanction by a spiritual agent of a lower rank, they denied His Universal Providence. The apostle, therefore, felt it necessary to enter his protest against all such cosmogonies. He declared that Jehovah alone, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, existed from eternity; and that all things spiritual and material arose out of nothing in obedience to the word of the second person of the Godhead. "By him," says he, "were all things *created*, that are in heaven and that are in earth, *visible and invisible*, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created by him and for him, and he is *before all things*, and by him *all things consist*." [1]

The philosophical system of the Gnostics also led them to adopt false views respecting *the body of Christ*. As, according to their theory, the Messiah came to deliver men from the bondage of evil matter, they could not consistently acknowledge that He himself inhabited an earthly tabernacle. They refused to admit that our Lord was born of a human parent; and, as they asserted that He had a body only in appearance, or that His visible form as man was in reality a phantom, they were at length known by the title of Docetæ. The Apostle John repeatedly attests the folly and the danger of such speculations. "The Word," says he, "was *made flesh* and dwelt among us.[3] . . . . Every spirit that *confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh* is not of God.[4] . . . . That which was from the beginning, which we have *heard*, which we have *seen* with our eyes, which we have *looked upon*, and *our hands have handled* of the Word of Life, ... declare we unto you.[5] . . . . *Many deceivers* are entered into

[1] Col. i. 16, 17. [2] From δοκέω, I appear.
[3] John i. 14. [4] 1 John iv. 3. [5] 1 John i. 1–3.

the world who confess not that *Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*."[1]

Reasoning from the principle that evil is inherent in matter, the Gnostics believed the union of the soul and the body to be a calamity. According to their views the spiritual being can never attain the perfection of which he is susceptible so long as he remains connected with his present corporeal organization. Hence they rejected the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. When Paul asks the Corinthians, "How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?"[2] he alludes to the Gnostic denial of this article of the Christian theology. He also refers to the same circumstance when he denounces the "profane and vain babblings" of those who "concerning the truth" had erred, "saying that the resurrection is past already."[3] These heretics maintained that an introduction to their *Gnosis*, or knowledge, was the only genuine deliverance from the dominion of death; and argued accordingly that, in the case of those who had been initiated into the mysteries of their system, the resurrection was "past already."

The ancient Christian writers concur in stating that Simon, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles,[4] and commonly called Simon Magus, was the father of the sects of the Gnostics.[6] He was a Samaritan by birth, and after the rebuke he received from Peter,[6] he is reported to have withdrawn from the Church and to have concocted a theology of his own, into which he imported some elements borrowed from Christianity. At a subsequent period he travelled to Rome, where he attracted attention by the novelty of his creed and the boldness of his pretensions. Prior to his baptism by Philip, he "had used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one";[7] and subsequently he pursued a similar career. According to a very early authority, nearly all the inhabitants of his native country, and a few persons in other districts, worshipped him as the first or supreme God.[8]

[1] 2 John 7. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 12. [3] 2 Tim. ii. 16–18.
[4] Acts viii. 9. [6] Irenæus, i. 23; Eusebius, ii. 13.
[6] Acts viii. 20–23. [7] Acts viii. 9.
[8] Justin Martyr, "Apol." ii. 69. Edit. Paris, 1615.

There is, probably, some exaggeration in this statement; but there is no reason to doubt that he laid claim to extraordinary powers, maintaining that the same spirit which had been imparted to Jesus, had descended on himself. He denied that our Lord had a real body. Some, who did not enroll themselves under his standard, soon partially adopted his principles; and Hymenæus, Philetus, Alexander, Phygellus, and Hermogenes, mentioned in the New Testament,[1] were all more or less tinctured with the spirit of Gnosticism. Other heresiarchs, not named in the sacred record, are known to have flourished toward the close of the first century. Of these the most famous were Carpocrates, Cerinthus, and Ebion.[2] It is stated that John's testimony to the dignity of the Word, in the beginning of his Gospel, was designed as an antidote to the errors of Cerinthus.[3]

When the Gospel exerts its proper influence on the character it produces an enlightened, genial, and consistent piety; but a false faith is apt to lead, in practice, to one of two extremes, either the asceticism of the Essene, or the sensualism of the Sadducee. Gnosticism developed itself in both these directions. Some of its advocates maintained that, as matter is essentially evil, the corrupt propensities of the body should be kept in constant subjection by a life of rigorous mortification; others held that, as the principle of evil is inherent in the corporeal frame, the malady is beyond the reach of cure, and that, therefore, the animal nature should be permitted freely to indulge its peculiar appetites. To the latter party, as some think, belonged the Nicolaitanes noticed by John in the Apocalypse.[4] They are said to have derived their name from Nicolas, one of the seven deacons ordained by the apos-

[1] 1 Tim. i. 20; 2 Tim. i. 15, ii. 17, iv. 14.

[2] Irenæus, i. 25, 26; Tertullian, "De Præscrip. Hæret." 33; Epiphanius, "Hær." xxx. 2, lxix. 23.

[3] Irenæus, iii. 11. The story that John, on meeting Cerinthus in a bath at Ephesus, fled out of the place lest the building should fall on him, is a legend unworthy the character of the "Son of Thunder." Cerinthus was one of the earliest millenarians. See Euseb. iii. 28.

[4] Rev. ii. 6, 15.

tles;[1] and to have been a class of Gnostics noted for their licentiousness. The origin of the designation may admit of some dispute; but those to whom it was applied were alike lax in principle and dissolute in practice, for the Spirit of God has declared His abhorrence as well of the "*doctrine*," as of "the *deeds* of the Nicolaitanes."[2]

Though the Jews, in the time of our Lord, were so much divided in sentiment, and though the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes had each their theological peculiarities, their sectarianism did not involve any complete severance or separation. Notwithstanding their differences of creed, the Pharisees and Sadducees sat together in the Sanhedrim,[3] and worshipped together in the temple. All the seed of Abraham constituted one Church, and congregated in the same sacred courts to celebrate the great festivals. In the Christian Church, in the days of the apostles, there was something approaching to the same outward unity. Though, for instance, there were so many parties among the Corinthians—though one said, I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos, and another I am of Cephas, and another I am of Christ—all assembled in the same place to join in the same worship, and to partake of the same Eucharist. Those who withdrew from the disciples with whom they had been previously associated, generally relinquished altogether the profession of Christianity.[4] Some, at least, of the Gnostics acted very differently. When danger appeared they were inclined to temporize, and to discontinue their attendance on the worship of the Church; but they were desirous to remain still nominally connected with the great body of believers.[5] Any form of alliance with such errorists was, however, considered a cause of scandal; and the inspired teachers of the Gospel insisted on their exclusion from ecclesiastical fellow-

[1] Acts vi. 5. Others conceive, however, that the name Nicolaitanes is equivalent to Balaamites (as Balaam in Hebrew is nearly equivalent to Nicolas in Greek, each word signifying *Ruler*, or Conqueror *of the people*), and that the apostle does not here refer to any party already known by this designation, but to all who, like Balaam, were seducers of God's people. See Neander, "General History," ii. 159. Edinburgh edition, 1847.

[2] Rev. ii. 6, 15.

[3] Acts xxiii. 1, 6.

[4] 1 John ii. 19.

[5] Compare Jude 19, and Heb. x. 25.

ship. Hence Paul declares that he had delivered Hymenæus and Alexander "unto Satan," that they might learn "not to blaspheme";[1] and John upbraids the Church in Pergamos because it retained in its communion "them that held the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes."[2] During the first century the Gnostics seem to have been unable to create anything like a schism among those who had embraced Christianity. Whilst the apostles lived, the "science, falsely so called," could not pretend to a divine sanction; and though here and there they displayed considerable activity in the dissemination of their principles, they were sternly and effectually discountenanced. It is accordingly stated by one of the earliest ecclesiastical writers that, in the time of Simeon of Jerusalem, who finished his career in the beginning of the second century, "they called the Church as yet a virgin, inasmuch as it was not yet corrupted by vain discourses."[3] Other writers concur in bearing testimony to the fact that, whilst the apostles were on earth, false teachers failed "to divide the unity" of the Christian commonwealth, "by the introduction of corrupt doctrines."[4]

The Gospel affords scope for the healthful and vigorous exercise of the human understanding, and it is itself the highest and purest wisdom. It likewise supplies a test for ascertaining the state of the heart. Those who receive it with faith unfeigned will delight to meditate on its wonderful discoveries; but those who are unrenewed in the spirit of their minds will render to it only a doubtful submission, and will pervert its plainest announcements. The apostle therefore says, "There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."[5] The heretic is made manifest alike by his deviations from the doctrines and the precepts of revelation. His creed does not exhibit the con-

[1] 1 Tim. i. 20.

[2] Rev. ii. 15.

[3] Hegesippus in Euseb. iv. 22.

[4] Eusebius, iv. 22.

[5] 1 Cor. xi. 19. Augustine, after quoting this text, adds: "There are many things pertaining to the catholic faith which, that we may defend against the heretics who are restlessly and furiously discussing them, are at once studied more diligently, understood more clearly, and preached more zealously."—*City of God*, xvi. 2.

sistency of truth, and his life fails to display the beauty of holiness. Bible Christianity is neither superstitious nor sceptical, neither austere nor sensual. "The wisdom that is from above is *first pure*, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, *full of mercy and good fruits* without partiality and without hypocrisy."[1]

[1] James iii. 17.

SECTION III.

THE WORSHIP AND CONSTITUTION OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

THE LORD'S DAY—THE WORSHIP OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH —ITS SYMBOLIC ORDINANCES AND ITS DISCIPLINE.

TO the primitive disciples the day on which our Lord rose from the grave was a crisis of intense excitement. The crucifixion had cast a dismal cloud over their prospects; for, immediately before, when Jesus entered Jerusalem amidst the hosannas of the multitude, they probably anticipated the establishment of His sovereignty as the Messiah: yet, when His body was committed to the tomb, they did not at once sink into despair; and, though filled with anxiety, they ventured to indulge a hope that the third day after His demise would be signalized by some new revelation.[1] The report of those who were early at the sepulchre at first inspired the residue of the disciples with wonder and perplexity;[2] but, as the proofs of His resurrection multiplied, they became confident and joyful. Ever afterward the first day of the week was observed by them as the season of holy convocation.[3] Those members of the Apostolic Church who had been originally Jews, continued for some time to meet together also on the Saturday; but what was called "The Lord's Day,"[4] was regarded by all as sacred to Christ.

[1] Luke xxiv. 21. [2] Luke xxiv. 17, 22, 23. [3] Acts xx. 7.

[4] Rev. i. 10, *ἡ κυριακὴ ἡμέρα*. The day was ever afterward distinguished by this designation. See a letter from Dionysius of Corinth in Eusebius,

It has often been asserted that, during His own ministry, our Saviour encouraged His disciples to violate the Sabbath, and thus prepared the way for its abolition. But this theory is as destitute of foundation as it is dangerous to morality. Even the ceremonial law continued binding till Jesus expired upon the cross; and He felt it to be His duty to attend to every jot and tittle of its appointments.[1] Thus it became Him "to fulfil all righteousness."[2] He is at pains to show that the acts of which the Pharisees complained as breaches of the Sabbath could be vindicated by Old Testament authority;[3] and that these formalists "condemned *the guiltless*,"[4] when they denounced the disciples as doing that which was unlawful. Jesus never transgressed either the letter or the spirit of any commandment pertaining to the holy rest; but superstition had added to the written law a multitude of minute observances; and every Israelite was at perfect liberty to neglect any or all of these frivolous regulations.

The Great Teacher never intimated that the Sabbath was a ceremonial ordinance to cease with the Mosaic ritual. It was instituted when our first parents were in Paradise;[5] and the precept enjoining its remembrance, being a portion of the Decalogue,[6] is of perpetual obligation. Hence, instead of regarding it as a merely Jewish institution, Christ declares that it "was made for MAN,"[7] or, in other words, that it was designed for the benefit of the whole human family. Instead of anticipating its extinction along with the ceremonial law, He speaks of its existence after the downfall of Jerusalem. When He announces the calamities connected with the ruin of the holy city, He instructs His followers to pray that the urgency of the catastrophe may not deprive them of the comfort of the ordinances of the sacred rest. "Pray ye," said he, "that your

iv. 23. See also Kaye's "Clement of Alexandria," p. 418. The first day of the week is called "the Christian Sabbath" in the Ethiopic version of the "Apostolical Constitutions." See Platt's "Didascalia," p. 99. But these Constitutions are of comparatively late origin.

[1] Matt. v. 17–19.
[2] Matt. iii. 15.
[3] Matt. xii. 3–5; Mark ii. 25, 26.
[4] Matt. xii. 7.
[5] Gen. ii. 3.
[6] Exod. xx. 1–17.
[7] Mark ii. 27.

flight be not in the winter, *neither on the Sabbath-day*."[1] And the prophet Isaiah, when describing the ingathering of the Gentiles and the glory of the Church in the times of the Gospel, mentions the keeping of the Sabbath as characteristic of the children of God. "The sons of the stranger," says he, "that join themselves to the Lord to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one *that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it*, and taketh hold of my covenant—even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar:[2] for mine house shall be called an house of prayer *for all people*."[3]

But when Jesus declared that "the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath,"[4] He unquestionably asserted His right to alter the circumstantials of its observance. He accordingly abolished its ceremonial worship, gave it a new name, and changed the day of its celebration. He signalized the first day of the week by then appearing once and again to His disciples after His resurrection,[5] and by that Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit[6] which marks the commencement of a new era in the history of redemption. As the Lord's day was

[1] Matt. xxiv. 20. [2] See Heb. xiii. 10, 15, 16; Ps. li. 17.

[3] Isa. lvi. 6, 7. Compare with Isa. ii. 2. [4] Mark ii. 28.

[5] John xx. 19, 26. According to the current style of speaking, "after eight days" means *the eighth day after*. See Matt. xxvii. 63.

[6] Acts ii. 1. That the day of Pentecost was the first day of the week appears from Lev. xxiii. 11, 15. The same inference may be drawn from John xviii. 28, and xix. 31, compared with Lev. xxiii. 5, 6. See also Schaff's "History of the Apostolic Church," i. p. 230, note, and the authorities there quoted. "The day of Pentecost, on whatever day of the week it fell, was a Sabbath, Lev. xxiii. 21. So here, on the very day of the commemoration or the promulgation of the old law, we have also the promulgation of the new, which we may consider as the virtual repeal of the temporary part of the old—as the substitution of the new for the old dispensation—here, on this very day, we have the Lord's Day and the Sabbath combined together." "Scripture Account of the Sabbath," by Archdeacon Stopford, p. 220. London, 1837.

consecrated to the Lord's service,[1] the disciples did not now neglect the assembling of themselves together;[2] and the apostle commanded them at this holy season to set apart a portion of their gains for religious purposes.[3] It was most fitting that the first day of the week should be thus distinguished under the new economy; for the deliverance of the Church is a more illustrious achievement than the formation of the world;[4] and as the primeval Sabbath commemorated the rest of the Creator, the Christian Sabbath reminds us of the completion of the work of the Redeemer. "There remaineth, therefore, the keeping of a Sabbath[5] to the people of God, for he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."[6]

As many of the converts from Judaism urged the circumcision of their Gentile brethren, they were likewise disposed to insist on their observance of the Hebrew festivals. The apostles, at least for a considerable time, did not deem it expedient positively to forbid the keeping of such days; but they required that, in matters of this nature, every one should be left to his own discretion. "One man," says Paul, "esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."[7] The Lord's day is not included in this compromise; for from the morning of the resurrection there was no dispute as to its claims, and its very title attests the general recognition of its authority. The apostle can refer only to days which were typical and ceremonial. Hence he says elsewhere, "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect

[1] In the same way the Eucharist is called the Lord's Supper: *Κυριακὸν δεῖπνον* (1 Cor. xi. 20). Thus also we speak of the Lord's house and the Lord's people.

[2] Heb. x. 25. [3] 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. [4] Isa. lxv. 17, 18.

[5] *Σαββατισμός*. See Owen "On the Hebrews," iv. 9.

[6] Heb. iv. 9, 10. "As that rest, which all the world was to observe, was founded in the works and rest of Him who built or made the world, and all things in it; so the rest of the Church of the Gospel is to be founded in the works and rest of Him by whom the Church itself was built, that is, Jesus Christ."—*Owen*.

[7] Rom. xiv. 5.

of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days—*which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ.*"[1]

Though the New Testament furnishes no full and circumstantial description of the worship of the Christian Church, it makes such incidental allusions to its various parts as enable us to form a pretty accurate idea of its general character. Like the worship of the synagogue,[2] it consisted of prayer, praise, reading the Scriptures, and expounding or preaching. Those who joined the Church, for several years after it was first organized, were almost exclusively converts from Judaism, and when they embraced the Christian faith, they retained the order of religious service to which they had been hitherto accustomed; but by the recognition of Jesus Christ as the Messiah of whom the law and the prophets testified, their old forms were inspired with new life and significance. At first the heathen did not challenge the distinction between the worship of the synagogue and the Church; and thus it was, as has already been intimated, that for a considerable portion of the first century, the Christians and the Jews were frequently confounded.

It has often been asserted that the Jews had a liturgy when our Lord ministered in their synagogues; but the proof adduced in support of this statement is far from satisfactory; and their prayers, which are still extant, and which are said to have been then in use, must obviously have been written after the destruction of Jerusalem.[3] It is, however, certain that the

[1] Col. ii. 16, 17.

[2] The ordinary temple service was peculiar. It was, to a great extent, ceremonial and typical, consisting largely of sacrificing, burning incense, and offering various oblations. The worshippers often prayed apart. See Luke i. 10, xviii. 10, 11. But all the ordinances of the temple—such as the reading of the law—were not ceremonial.

[3] See these eighteen prayers in Prideaux's "Connexions," i. 375, and note. Bingham admits (Orig. iv. 194) that these words were their "*most ancient*" forms of devotion; and, of course, if they were written after the fall of Jerusalem, it follows that the Jews had no liturgy in the days of our Lord. Had they then been limited to fixed forms, He would scarcely have upbraided the Scribes and Pharisees for hypocritically "*making long prayer.*" Matt. xxiii. 14.

Christians in the apostolic age were not restricted to any particular forms of devotion. The liturgies ascribed to Mark, James, and others, are unquestionably the fabrications of later times;[1] and had any of the inspired teachers of the Gospel composed a book of common prayer, it would have been received into the canon of the New Testament. Our Lord taught His disciples to pray, and supplied them with a model to guide them in their devotional exercises;[2] but there is no evidence whatever that, in their stated services, they constantly employed the language of that beautiful and comprehensive formulary. The very idea of a liturgy was altogether alien to the spirit of the primitive believers. They were commanded to give thanks "in everything,"[3] to pray "always *with all prayer and supplication* in the spirit,"[4] and to watch thereunto "with all perseverance and supplication *for all saints*";[5] and had they been limited to a form, they would have found it impossible to comply with these admonitions. Their prayers were dictated by the occasion, and varied according to passing circumstances. Some of them which have been recorded,[6] had a special reference to the occurrences of the day, and could not have well admitted of repetition. In the apostolic age, when the Spirit was poured out in such rich effusion on the Church, the gift, as well as the grace, of prayer was imparted abundantly, so that a liturgy would have been superfluous, if not directly calculated to freeze the genial current of devotion.

Singing, in which—as some contend—none but Levites were permitted to unite,[7] and which was accompanied by instrumental music, constituted, at least from the days of David, a part of the ritual of Jewish worship. The singers occupied an elevated platform adjoining the court of the priests;[8] and the sounds of cymbals, psalteries, and harps, mingled with

[1] See Palmer's "Origines Liturgicæ," i. pp. 44–92; and Clarkson's "Discourse concerning Liturgies"; "Select Works," p. 342.

[2] Matt. vi. 9–13. [3] 1 Thess. v. 18. [4] Eph. vi. 18.

[5] Eph. vi. 18. [6] Acts i. 24, 25, iv. 24–30.

[7] See Lightfoot's "Temple Service," ch. vii., sec. 1, "Works," ix. 56.

[8] Lightfoot's "Prospect of the Temple," ch. xxxiiii., "Works," ix. 384.

their well-trained voices, must have exercised a thrilling influence.[1] But the early Christians—constantly depressed by persecution, and often obliged to hold their religious assemblies in some secluded spot at dead of night—could not think of attempting to emulate such a magnificent service of praise. These were the days of darkness, predicted by the Great Bridegroom,[2] when they were to fast and mourn, and when they could make no provision for the embellishments of artistic melody. It is not, therefore, strange that instrumental music was not heard in their congregational services.

The Jews divided the Pentateuch and the writings of the Prophets into sections, one of which was read every Sabbath in the synagogue;[3] and thus, in the place set apart to the service of the God of Israel, His own will was constantly proclaimed. The Christians bestowed equal honor on the holy oracles; for in their solemn assemblies, the reading of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament formed part of their stated worship.[4] At the close of this exercise, one or more of the elders edified the congregation, either by giving a general exposition of the passage read, or by insisting particularly on some point of doctrine or duty which it obviously inculcated. If a prophet was present, he, too, had an opportunity of addressing the auditory.[5]

As apostolic Christianity aimed to impart light to the understanding, its worship was uniformly conducted in the language of the people. It, indeed, attested its divine origin by miracles, and it accordingly enabled some to speak in tongues in which they had never been instructed; but it permitted such individuals to exercise their gifts in the church, only when interpreters were present to translate their communications.[6]

[1] The Rabbins report that the sound of the temple service could be heard at Jericho; but this is obviously an absurd exaggeration.

[2] Mark ii. 20. [3] Luke iv. 16, 17. [4] Col. iv. 16; 1 Thess. v. 27.

[5] 1 Cor. xiv. 29. Only *two* or *three* persons were permitted to speak at a meeting. By him that "sitteth by" (verse 30), a doctor or teacher is meant. See Vitringa, "De Synagoga," p. 600, and Matt. v. 1.

[6] 1 Cor. xiv. 27. The gift of "interpretation of tongues" (1 Cor. xii. 10) was quite as wonderful as the gift of "divers kinds of tongues" (1 Cor. xii. 10).

Whilst the gift of tongues, possessed by so many of the primitive disciples, attracted the attention of the Gentile as well as of the Jewish literati, it also made a powerful impression on the popular mind, especially in large cities; for in such places there were always foreigners to whom these strange utterances were perfectly intelligible, and for whom a discourse delivered in the speech of their native country had peculiar charms. But in the worship of the primitive Christians, the arrangements were of the most simple character. In their depressed condition, they often conducted their services under circumstances of extreme discomfort. For the whole of the first century they celebrated their religious ordinances in private houses,[1] and their ministers officiated in their ordinary costume. John, the forerunner of our Saviour, "had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins";[2] but perhaps few of the early Christian preachers were arrayed in such coarse canonicals.

The Founder of the Christian religion instituted only two symbolic ordinances—Baptism and the Lord's Supper.[3] It is universally admitted that, in the apostolic age, baptism was dispensed to all who embraced the Gospel; but it has been much disputed whether it was also administered to the infant children of the converts. The testimony of Scripture on the subject is not very explicit, for, as the ordinance was in common use among the Jews,[4] a minute description of its mode and subjects was deemed unnecessary by the apostles and evangelists. When an adult heathen was received into the Church of Israel, it is well known that the little children of

[1] 1 Cor. xvi. 19; Col. iv. 15; Philem. 2. [2] Matt. iii. 4.

[3] The rite of confirmation, as now practiced, has no sanction in the New Testament. The "baptisms" and "laying on of hands," mentioned Heb. vi. 2, are obviously the "divers washings" of the Jews, and the *imposition of hands on the heads of victims*. The laying on of the apostles' hands conferred miraculous gifts. Had the apostle referred to Christian baptism in Heb. vi. 2, he would have used the singular number.

[4] Lightfoot affirms that the use of baptism among the Israelites was as ancient as the days of Jacob. He appeals in support of this view to Gen. xxxv. 2. "Works," iv. 278.

the proselyte were admitted along with him;[1] and as the Christian Scriptures *nowhere forbid* the dispensation of the rite to infants, it may be presumed that the same practice was observed by the primitive ministers of the Gospel. This inference is emphatically corroborated by the fact that, of the comparatively small number of passages in the New Testament which treat of its administration, no less than *five* refer to the baptism of whole households.[2] These five cases are not mentioned as rare or peculiar, but as ordinary specimens of the method of apostolic procedure. It is not, indeed, absolutely certain that there was an infant in any of these five households; but it is, unquestionably, much more probable that they contained a fair proportion of little children, than that every individual in each of them had arrived at years of maturity, and that all these adults, without exception, at once participated in the faith of the head of the family, and became candidates for baptism.

In the New Testament faith is represented as the grand qualification for baptism;[3] but this principle obviously applies only to all who are capable of believing; for, in the Word of God, faith is also represented as necessary to salvation,[4] and yet it is generally conceded that little children may be saved. Under the Jewish dispensation infants were circumcised, and were thus recognized as interested in the divine favor, so that, if they be excluded from the rite of baptism, it follows that they occupy a worse position under a milder and more glorious economy. But the New Testament forbids us to adopt such an inference. It declares that infants should be "suffered to come" to the Saviour;[5] it indicates that baptism supplies the place of circumcision, for it connects the Gospel institution

[1] Lightfoot's "Works," iv. 409, 410. Edit. London, 1822.

[2] Acts x. 2, 44–48, xvi. 15, 33, xviii. 8; 1 Cor. i. 16.

[3] Acts viii. 37. [4] Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 18.

[5] Matt. xix. 14; Luke xviii. 15. In the New Testament children are described as uniting with their Christian parents in prayer (Acts xxi. 5). Were not these children baptized? They were, no doubt, brought up "in the *nurture* and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. vi. 4).

with "the circumcision of Christ";[1] it speaks of children as "saints," and as "in the Lord,"[2] and, therefore, as having received some visible token of Church membership; and it assures them that their sins are forgiven them "for His name's sake."[3] The New Testament does not record a single case in which the offspring of Christian parents were admitted to baptism on arriving at years of intelligence; but it tells of the apostles exhorting the men of Judea to repent and to submit to the ordinance, inasmuch as it was a privilege proffered to them and *to their children*.[4] Nay, more, Paul plainly teaches that the seed of the righteous are entitled to the recognition of saintship, and that, even when only one of the parents is a Christian, the offspring do not on that account forfeit their ecclesiastical inheritance. "The unbelieving husband," says he, "is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband, else were your *children* unclean, but *now are they holy*."[5] This passage demonstrates that the Apostolic Church recognized the holiness of infants, or, in other words, that it admitted them to baptism.

The Scriptures furnish no very specific instructions as to the mode of baptism, and, in its administration, the primitive heralds of the Gospel did not adhere to a system of rigid uniformity.[6] Some have asserted that the Greek word translated *baptize*,[7] in our authorized version, always signifies *immerse*, but it has been clearly shown[8] that this statement is inaccu-

[1] Col. ii. 11, 12, 13.

[2] Col. i. 2, iii. 20; Eph. vi. 1, 4.

[3] 1 John ii. 12.

[4] Acts ii. 38, 39.

[5] 1 Cor. vii. 14. The absurdity of the interpretation according to which *holy* is here made to signify *legitimate*, is well exposed by Dr. Wilson in his treatise on "Infant Baptism," p. 513. London, 1848. Such passages as Levit. xxi. 7–9, and xxii. 11, 12, illustrate the meaning of the words quoted in the text.

[6] This would, indeed, have been almost, if not altogether, impossible. They would act differently at the river Jordan and in such a place as the jail at Philippi.

[7] Βαπτίζω.

[8] Dr. Wilson has demonstrated the incorrectness of Dr. Carson's statements on this subject. See his "Infant Baptism," p. 96. If, as some think, when the apostle speaks of those "baptized for the dead" (1 Cor. xv. 29), he refers to those defiled by coming in contact with a dead body or a grave (see Numbers xix.), and sprinkled, in order to purification, with the ashes of the red heifer, he makes sprinkling to be a form of baptism.

rate, and that baptism does not necessarily imply *dipping*. In ancient times, and in the lands where the apostles labored, bathing was as frequently performed by *affusion* as immersion,[1] and the apostles varied their method of baptizing according to circumstances.[2] The ordinance was intended to convey the idea of *washing* or purifying, and it is obvious that water may be applied, in many ways, as the means of ablution. In the sacred volume *sprinkling* is often spoken of as equivalent to *washing*.[3]

As baptism was designed to supersede the Jewish circumcision, the Lord's Supper was intended to occupy the place of the Jewish Passover.[4] The Paschal lamb could be sacrificed nowhere except in the temple of Jerusalem, and the Passover was kept only once a year; but the Eucharist could be dispensed wherever a Christian congregation was collected; and at this period it seems to have been often observed on the first day of the week, at least by the more zealous and devout worshippers.[5] The wine, as well as the other element, was given to all who joined in its celebration; and the title of the "Breaking of *Bread*,"[6] one of the names by which the ordinance was originally distinguished, supplies evidence that the doctrine of transubstantiation was utterly unknown. The word *Sacrament*, as applied to Baptism and the Holy Supper, was not in use in the days of the apostles, and the subsequent introduc-

[1] Wilson's "Infant Baptism," p. 157. In Titus iii. 5, 6, there is something like a reference to this mode of baptism: "The washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost which *he shed* (or *poured out*) on us abundantly." Οὗ ἐξέχεεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς πλουσίως. Many of the ancient baths were adapted only for affusion. The "*Baptisterium* is not a bath sufficiently large to immerse the whole body, but a vessel or labrum containing cold water for pouring on the head."—*Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*. Art. Baths. The name of this vessel demonstrates that, in ancient times, baptizing did not necessarily imply dipping or immersion. See, also, Muir's "Life of Mahomet," iv. 261.

[2] In some cases, as at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, they had not the means of immersing their converts. See also Acts x. 47. The text, John iii. 23, indicates the difficulty of baptizing by dipping.

[3] Isa. lii. 15; Ezek. xxxvi. 25; 1 Pet. i. 2; Heb. ix. 10, 21, 22; Rev. i. 5.

[4] 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. [5] Acts xx. 7. [6] Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. x. 16.

tion of a new nomenclature,[1] contributed to throw an air of mystery around these institutions. The primitive disciples considered the elements employed in them simply as signs and seals of spiritual blessings; and they had no more idea of regarding the bread in the Eucharist as the real body of our Saviour, than they had of believing that the water of baptism is the very blood in which He washed His people from their sins. They knew that they enjoyed the light of His countenance in prayer, in meditation, and in the hearing of His Word, and that He was only spiritually present in these symbolic ordinances.

Whilst, in the Lord's Supper, believers hold fellowship with Christ, they also maintain and exhibit their communion with each other. "We, being many," says Paul, "are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread."[2] Those who joined together in the observance of this holy institution were thereby pledged to mutual love; but every one who acted in such a way as to bring reproach upon the Christian name, was no longer admitted to the sacred table. Paul refers to exclusion from this ordinance, as well as from intimate civil intercourse, when he says to the Corinthians, "I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."[3]

In the synagogue all cases of discipline were decided by the bench of elders;[4] and it is plain, from the New Testament, that those who occupied a corresponding position in the Christian Church, exercised similar authority. They are described as having the oversight of the flock,[5] as bearing rule,[6] as watching for souls,[7] and as taking care of the Church of

[1] It was in use before the end of the second century. See Kaye's "Tertullian," pp. 431, 451.

[2] 1 Cor. x. 17. [3] 1 Cor. v. 11.

[4] See Lightfoot's "Works," iii. 242, and xi. 179. Vitringa, "De Synagoga," p. 550.

[5] Acts xx. 28. [6] Heb. xiii. 17. [7] Heb. xiii. 17.

God.[1] They are instructed how to deal with offenders,[2] and they are said to be entitled to obedience.[3] Such representations imply that they were intrusted with the administration of ecclesiastical discipline.

This account of the functions of the spiritual rulers has by some been considered inconsistent with several statements in the apostolic epistles. It has been alleged that, according to these letters, the administration of discipline was vested in the whole body of the people; and that originally the members of the Church, in their collective capacity, exercised the right of excommunication. The language of Paul, in reference to a case of scandal which occurred among the Christians of Corinth, has been often quoted in proof of the democratic character of their ecclesiastical constitution. "It is reported commonly," says the apostle, "that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. . . . . Therefore *put away from among yourselves that wicked person.*"[4] The admonition was obeyed, and the application of discipline produced a most salutary impression on the mind of the offender. In his next letter the apostle accordingly alludes to this circumstance, and observes: "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was *inflicted of many.*"[5] These words have been frequently adduced to show that the government of the Corinthian Church was administered by the whole body of the communicants.

The various statements of Scripture, if rightly understood, exactly harmonize, and a closer investigation of the case of this transgressor is all that is required to prove that he was not tried and condemned by a tribunal composed of the whole mass of the members of the Church of Corinth. His true history reveals facts of a very different character. For reasons which it would, perhaps, be now in vain to hope fully to explore, he was a favorite among his fellow-disciples; many of them, prior to their conversion, had been grossly licentious;

[1] 1 Tim. iii. 5. [2] 1 Tim. v. 19, 20. [3] Heb. xiii. 17.
[4] 1 Cor. v. 1, 13. [5] 2 Cor. ii. 6.

and they continued to regard certain lusts of the flesh with an eye of comparative indulgence.[1] Some of them probably considered the conduct of this offender as only a legitimate exercise of his Christian liberty; and manifested a strong inclination to shield him from ecclesiastical censure. Paul, therefore, felt it necessary to address them in the language of indignant expostulation. "*Ye are puffed up*," says he, "and have not rather mourned that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. . . . . *Your glorying is not good.* Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"[2] At the same time, as an apostle bound to vindicate the reputation of the Church, and to enforce the rules of ecclesiastical discipline, he solemnly announces his determination to have the offender excommunicated. "I verily," says he, "as absent in body, but present in spirit, *have judged* already as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *when ye are gathered together*, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, *to deliver such an one unto Satan* for the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."[3] To deliver any one to Satan is to expel him from the Church—for whoever is not in the Church is in the wor d, and "the whole world lieth in the Wicked one."[4] This discipline was designed to teach the fornicator to mortify his lusts, and it thus aimed at the promotion of his highest interests; or, as the apostle expresses it, he was to be excommunicated "for the destruction of the flesh,[5] that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

The Church of Corinth was now in a state of great disorder.

[1] See Period I., section i., chap v., p. 78.

[2] 1 Cor. v. 2, 6.

[3] 1 Cor. v. 3–5.

[4] 1 John v. 19, ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ.

[5] In the above passage respecting delivering unto Satan there is, perhaps, a reference to Job. ii. 6, 7, and it may be that some bodily affliction rested on the offender. In that case there was here an exercise of supernatural power on the part of Paul. According to Tertullian, to deliver to Satan was simply to excommunicate. "De ceteris dixit qui illis traditis Satanæ, id est, extra ecclesiam projectis, erudiri haberent blasphemandum non esse."—*De Pudicitia*, c. xiii.

A partisan spirit had crept in among its members;[1] and it is probable that those elders[2] who were anxious to maintain wholesome discipline were opposed and overborne. The fornicator had in some way contrived to make himself so popular that an attempt at his expulsion would, it was feared, throw the whole society into hopeless confusion. Under these circumstances Paul felt it necessary to interpose, to assert his apostolic authority, and to insist on the maintenance of ecclesiastical order. Instead, however, of consulting the people as to the course to be pursued, he peremptorily delivers his *judgment*, and requires them to hold a solemn assembly that they may listen to the public announcement[3] of a sentence of excommunication. He, of course, expected that their rulers would concur with him in this decision, and that one of them would officially publish it when they were "gathered together."

When the case is thus stated, it is easy to understand why the apostle required all the disciples to "put away" from among themselves "that wicked person." Had they continued to cherish the spirit they had recently displayed, they might either have encouraged the fornicator to refuse submission to the sentence, or have rendered it comparatively powerless. He therefore reminds them that they too should seek to promote the purity of ecclesiastical fellowship; and that they were bound to co-operate in carrying out a righteous discipline. They were to cease to recognize this fallen disciple as a servant of Christ; to withdraw themselves from his society; to decline to meet him on the same terms, as heretofore, in

[1] 1 Cor. i. 11, 12.

[2] That the Church of Corinth at this time was organized in the same way as other Christian communities is evident from various allusions in the first epistle. See 1 Cor. iv. 15, vi. 5, xii. 27, 28. Crispus, mentioned Acts xviii. 8, was, no doubt, one of the eldership. There is a reference to the elders in 1 Cor. xiv. 30. See Vitringa, "De Synagoga," p. 600.

[3] In the apostolic age, censures were pronounced in presence of the whole church. See 1 Tim. v. 20. It is to be noted that Paul himself does not excommunicate the offender. He merely delivers his apostolic judgment that the thing should be done, and calls upon the Corinthians to do it; but he expects them to proceed in due order, the rulers and the people performing their respective parts.

social intercourse; and not even to eat in his company. Thus would the reputation of the Church be vindicated; for in this way it would be immediately known to all who were without that he was no longer considered a member of the brotherhood.

The Corinthians were awakened to a sense of duty by this apostolic letter, and acted up to its instructions. The result was most satisfactory. When the offender saw that he was cut off from the Church, and that its members avoided his society, he was completely humbled. The sentence of the apostle, or the eldership, if opposed or neglected by the people, might have produced little impression; but "the punishment which was inflicted of many"—the immediate and entire abandonment of all connection with him by the disciples at Corinth—overwhelmed him with shame and terror. He felt as a man smitten by the judgment of God; he renounced his sin; and exhibited the most unequivocal tokens of genuine contrition. In due time he was restored to Church fellowship; and the apostle then exhorted his brethren to readmit him to intercourse, and to treat him with kindness and confidence. "Ye ought," says he, "rather to forgive him and comfort him, lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him."[1]

This case of the Corinthian fornicator has been recorded for the admonition and guidance of believers in all generations. It teaches that every member of a Christian Church is bound to use his best endeavors to promote a pure communion; and that he is not guiltless if, prompted by mistaken charity or considerations of selfishness, he is not prepared to co-operate in the exclusion of false brethren. Many an immoral minister has maintained his position, and has thus continued

[1] 2 Cor. ii. 7, 8. The mode of proceeding here indicated is illustrated by what took place in the Church of Rome about the middle of the third century. There certain penitents first appeared before the presbytery to express their contrition, and then it was arranged that "this whole proceeding should be communicated *to the people*, that they might see those established in the Church, whom they had so long seen and mourned wandering and straying."—Cyprian, Epist. xlvi., p. 136. Edit. Baluzius, Venice, 1728.

to bring discredit on the Gospel, simply because those who had witnessed his misconduct were induced to suppress their testimony; and many a church court has been prevented from enforcing discipline by the clamors or intimidation of an ignorant and excited congregation. The command, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person," is addressed to the people, as well as to the ministry; and all Christ's disciples should feel that, in vindicating the honor of His name, they have a common interest, and share a common responsibility. Every one can not be a member of a church court; but every one can aid in the preservation of church discipline. He may supply information, or give evidence, or encourage a healthy tone of public sentiment, or assist, by petition or remonstrance, in quickening the zeal of lukewarm judicatories. And discipline is never so influential as when it is known to be sustained by the approving verdict of a pious and intelligent community. The punishment "inflicted of many"—the withdrawal of the confidence and countenance of a whole church—is a most impressive admonition to a proud sinner.

In the apostolic age the sentence of excommunication had a very different significance from that which was attached to it at a subsequent period. Our Lord pointed out its import with equal precision and brevity when He said, "If thy brother . . . . neglect to hear the church,[1] let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."[2] The Israelites could have no religious fellowship with heathens, or the worshippers of false gods; and they could have no personal respect for publicans, or Roman tax-gatherers, who were regarded as odious representatives of the oppressors of their country. To be "unto them as an heathen" was to be excluded from the privileges of their church; and to be "unto them as a publican" was to be shut out from their society in the way of domestic intercourse. When the apostle says, "Now we command you, brethren, that *ye withdraw yourselves* from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the ordi-

[1] That "the church" here signifies the eldership, see Vitringa, "De Synagoga," p. 724.

[2] Matt. xviii. 15, 17.

nance[1] which he received of us,"[2] he designed to intimate that those who were excommunicated should be admitted neither to the intimacy of private friendship nor to the sealing ordinances of the Gospel. But it did not follow that the disciples were to treat such persons with insolence or inhumanity. They were not at liberty to act thus toward heathens and publicans; for they were to love even their enemies, and to imitate the example of their Father in heaven who "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."[3] It is obvious from the address of the apostle to the Thessalonians that the members of the Church were not forbidden to speak to those who were separated from communion; and that they were not required to refuse them the ordinary charities of life. They were simply to avoid such an intercourse as implied a community of faith, of feeling, and of interest. "If any man," says he, "obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and *have no company with him*, that he may be ashamed. Yet *count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother*."[4]

How different was this discipline from that established, several centuries afterward, in the Latin Church! The spirit and usages of paganism then supplanted the regulations of the New Testament, and the excommunication of Christianity was converted into the excommunication of Druidism.[5] Our Lord taught that "whoever would not hear the church" should be treated as a heathen man and a publican; but the time came when he who forfeited his status as a member of the Christian commonwealth was denounced as a monster or a fiend. Paul declared that the person excommunicated, instead of being counted as an enemy, should be admonished as a brother; but the Latin Church, in a long list of horrid impre-

[1] In our English version the original word (*παράδοσιν*) is improperly rendered *tradition*.

[2] 2 Thess. iii. 6.

[3] Matt. v. 45.

[4] 2 Thess. iii. 14, 15.

[5] For an account of the excommunication of the Druids, see Cæsar, "De Bello Gallico," vi. 13. Many things in the Latin excommunication are borrowed from paganism.

cations,[1] invoked a curse upon every member of the body of the offender, and commanded every one to refuse to him the civility of the coldest salutation! The early Church acted as a faithful monitor, anxious to reclaim the sinner from the error of his ways: the Latin Church, like a tyrant, refuses to the transgressor even that which is his due, and seeks either to reduce him to slavery or to drive him to despair.

[1] As an example of this, see an old form of excommunication in Collier's "Ecclesiastical History," ii. 273. Edit. London, 1840.

CHAPTER II.

THE EXTRAORDINARY TEACHERS OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH; AND ITS ORDINARY OFFICE-BEARERS, THEIR APPOINTMENT, AND ORDINATION.

PAUL declares that Christ "gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."[1] In another place the same writer, when speaking of those occupying positions of prominence in the ecclesiastical community, makes a somewhat similar enumeration. "God," says he, "hath set some in the church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then, gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."[2]

These two passages, presenting something like catalogues of the most prominent characters connected with the Apostolic Church, throw light upon each other. They mention the ordinary, as well as the extraordinary, ecclesiastical functionaries. Under the class of ordinary office-bearers must be placed those described as "pastors and teachers," "helps," and "governments." The evangelists, such as Timothy,[3] Titus, and Philip,[4] had a special commission to assist in organizing the infant Church;[5] and, as they were furnished with supernatural endowments,[6] they were extraordinary functionaries.

[1] Eph. iv. 11, 12. [2] 1 Cor. xii. 28. [3] 2 Tim. iv. 5.

[4] Acts xxi. 8, viii. 5. [5] 1 Tim. i. 3, v. 1, 7, 17; Tit. i. 5.

[6] Acts viii. 13; 2 Tim. i. 6. This latter text is often quoted, though erroneously, as if it referred to the ordination of Timothy. The ordainer usually laid on only his right hand. See "Con. Carthag." iv. can. iii. iv. In conferring extraordinary endowments both hands were imposed. See Acts xix. 6.

The apostles themselves clearly belong to the same denomination. They all possessed the gift of inspiration;[1] they all received their authority immediately from Christ;[2] they all "went in and out with Him" during His personal ministry; and, as they all saw Him after He rose from the dead, they could all attest His resurrection.[3] It is plain, too, that the ministrations of "the prophets," as well as of those who wrought "miracles," who possessed "gifts of healings," and who had "diversities of tongues," must also be designated extraordinary.

It is probable that by the "helps," of whom Paul here speaks, he understands *the deacons*,[4] who were originally appointed to relieve the apostles of a portion of labor which they felt to be inconvenient and burdensome.[5] The duties of the deacons were not strictly of a spiritual character; these ministers held only a subordinate station among the office-bearers of the Church; and, even in dealing with its temporalities, they acted under the advice and direction of those who were properly intrusted with its government. Hence, perhaps, they were called "helps" or attendants.[6]

When these helps and the extraordinary functionaries are left out of the apostolic catalogues, in the passage addressed to the Ephesians, we have nothing remaining but "PASTORS AND TEACHERS"; and, in that to the Corinthians nothing but "TEACHERS" AND "GOVERNMENTS." There are good grounds for believing that these two residuary elements are identical,—the "pastors," mentioned before[7] the teachers in one text, being equivalent to the "governments" mentioned after them in the other.[8] Nor is it strange that those in-

[1] John xiv. 26, xvi. 13, xx. 22. [2] Matt. x. 1, xxviii. 18, 19.

[3] John xx. 26, xxi. 1; Acts i. 3; 1 Cor. ix. 1.

[4] Such is the opinion of Chrysostom and others. See Alford on this passage.

[5] Acts vi. 2–4.

[6] In the Peshito version helps and governments are translated *helpers* and *governors*.

[7] It is remarkable that the lay council of the modern synagogue are called Parnasim or Pastors. See Vitringa, "De Synagoga," pp. 578, 635.

[8] Mr. Alford observes that in 1 Cor. xii. 28, "we must not seek for a

trusted with the ecclesiastical government should be styled pastors or shepherds; for they are the guardians and rulers of "the flock of God."[1] Thus the ordinary office-bearers of the Apostolic Church were pastors, teachers, and helps; or, teachers, rulers, and deacons.

In the apostolic age we read likewise of elders and bishops; and in the New Testament these names are often used interchangeably.[2] The elders, or bishops, were the same as the pastors and teachers; for they had the charge of the instruction and government of the Church.[3] Hence elders are required to act as faithful pastors under Christ, the Chief Shepherd.[4] Whilst some of the elders were only pastors, or rulers, others were also teachers. The apostle says accordingly, "Let the elders that *rule* well, be counted worthy of double honor, especially those that *labor in the word and doctrine*."[5] We thus see that the teachers, governments, and helps, mentioned by Paul when writing to the Corinthians, are the same as the "bishops and deacons" of whom he speaks elsewhere.[6]

In primitive times there were, generally, a plurality of elders, as well as a plurality of deacons, in every church or congregation;[7] and each functionary was expected to apply himself to that particular department of his office which he could manage most efficiently. Some elders possessed a peculiar talent for expounding the Gospel in the way of preaching, or, as it

classified arrangement"—the arrangement being "rather suggestive than logical." Hence "helps" are mentioned *before* "governments." In the same way in Eph. iv. 11, "pastors" precede "teachers."

[1] Acts xx. 28; 1 Pet. v. 2.

[2] Acts xxi. 17, 28; Titus i. 5, 7; 1 Pet. v. 1, 2.

[3] 1 Tim. iii. 1, 2, 5.

[4] 1 Pet. v. 1, 2, 4. The identity of elders and pastors is more distinctly exhibited in the original here, and in Acts xx. 17, 28, as the word translated *feed* signifies literally *to act as a shepherd* or pastor.

[5] 1 Tim. v. 17. Mr. Ellicott, in his work on the "Pastoral Epistles," thus speaks of this passage, "The concluding words, ἐν λόγῳ καὶ διδασκ., certainly seem to imply *two* kinds of ruling presbyters, those who preached and taught and those who did not."

[6] Compare 1 Cor. xii. 28, and Philip. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 1–8.

[7] Acts vi. 3, xiv. 23; Titus i. 5; James v. 14.

was occasionally called, prophesying;[1] others excelled in delivering hortatory addresses to the people; others displayed great tact and sagacity in conducting ecclesiastical business, or in dealing personally with offenders, or with penitents; whilst others again were singularly successful in imparting private instruction to catechumens. Some deacons were frequently commissioned to administer to the wants of the sick; and others, who were remarkable for their shrewdness and discrimination, were employed to distribute alms to the indigent. In one of his epistles Paul pointedly refers to the multiform duties of these ecclesiastical office-bearers, "Having then," says he, "gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry (of the deacon), let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness."[2]

Some maintain that all the primitive elders, or bishops, were preachers; but the records of apostolic times warrant no such conclusion. These elders were appointed to "take care of the Church of God";[3] and it was not necessary that each individual should perform all the functions of the pastoral office. Even at the present day a single preacher is generally sufficient to minister to a single congregation. When Paul requires that the elders who rule well, though they may not "labor in the word and doctrine," shall be counted worthy of double honor,[4] his language distinctly

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 1, 5, 6, 31. [2] Rom. xii. 6–8.

[3] 1 Tim. iii. 5. Lightfoot says that "in every synagogue there was a civil triumvirate, that is, three magistrates who judged of matters in contest arising within that synagogue."—*Works*, xi. 179. The same writer declares that "in every synagogue there were elders that ruled in civil affairs, and elders that labored in the word and doctrine."—*Works*, iii. 242, 243.

[4] *διπλῆς τιμῆς.* Those who adduce this passage to prove that the apostle here defines the pecuniary remuneration of elders, involve themselves in much difficulty; for, if limited to the matter of payment and literally interpreted, it would lead to the inference that, irrespective of the amount of service rendered, all the elders should receive the same compensation; and

indicates that there were then persons designated elders who did not preach, and who, notwithstanding, were entitled to respect as exemplary and efficient functionaries. It is remarkable that when the apostle enumerates the qualifications of a bishop, or elder,[1] he scarcely refers to oratorical endowments. He states that the ruler of the Church should be grave, sober, prudent, and benevolent; but, as to his ability to propagate his principles he employs only one word, rendered in our version "apt to teach."[2] This does not imply that he must be qualified to *preach*, for *teaching* and *preaching* are repeatedly distinguished in the New Testament;[3] neither does it signify that he is to become a professional tutor, for, as has already been intimated, all elders are not expected to labor in the word and doctrine; it merely denotes that he should be able and willing, as often as an opportunity occurred, to communicate a knowledge of divine truth. All believers are required to "exhort one another daily,"[4] "*teaching* and admonishing one another,"[5] being "ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them";[6] and those who "watch for souls" should be specially zealous in performing these duties of their Christian vocation. The word which has been supposed to indicate that every elder should be a public instructor occurs in only one other instance in the New Testament; and in that case it is used in a connection which serves to illustrate its meaning. Paul there states that whilst such as minister to the Lord should avoid a controversial spirit, they should at the same time be willing to supply explanations to objectors, and to furnish them with information. "The servant of the Lord," says he, "must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, *apt to*

that no church teacher, though the father of a large family, should be allowed more than twice the gratuity of a poor widow! Compare 1 Tim. v. 3, and 17. The "double honor" of 1 Tim. v. 17 is evidently equivalent to the "all honor" of 1 Tim. vi. 1. In the latter case there can be no reference to payment. Paul obviously means to say that the claims of elders should be fully recognized; and in the following verse (1 Tim. v. 18) he refers pointedly to the temporal support to which church teachers are entitled.

[1] 1 Tim. iii. 2–7. [2] διδακτικόν. [3] Matt. iv. 23; Acts v. 42, xv. 35.
[4] Heb. iii. 13. [5] Col. iii. 16. [6] 1 Peter iii. 15.

teach, patient, in meekness *instructing* those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."[1] Here the *aptness to teach* refers apparently to a talent for winning over gainsayers by means of instruction communicated in private conversation.[2]

But still preaching is the grand ordinance of God, as well for the edification of saints as for the conversion of sinners; and it was, therefore, necessary that at least some of the session or eldership connected with each flock should be competent to conduct the congregational worship. As spiritual gifts were more abundant in the apostolic times than afterward, at first several of the elders[3] were often found ready to take part in its celebration. By degrees, however, nearly the whole service devolved on one individual; and this preaching elder was very properly treated with peculiar deference.[4] He was accordingly soon recognized as the stated president of the presbytery, or eldership.

It thus appears that the preaching elder held the most honorable position among the ordinary functionaries of the Apostolic Church. Whilst his office required the highest order of gifts and accomplishments, and exacted the largest amount of mental and even physical exertion, the prosperity of the whole ecclesiastical community depended mainly on his acceptance and efficiency. The people are accordingly frequently reminded that they are bound to respect and sustain their spiritual instructors. "Let him that is taught in the word," says Paul, "communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."[5] "The Scripture saith, Thou

[1] 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

[2] Even a female, though not permitted to speak in the Church, had often this aptness for teaching. Such was the case with the excellent Priscilla, Acts xviii. 26. The aged women were required to be "teachers of good things," Titus ii. 5.

[3] In the Church of Corinth several speakers were in the habit of addressing the same meeting. 1 Cor. xiv. 26, 27, 29, 31.

[4] Tim. v. 17. Though ordination was by "the laying on of the hands of the presbytery," the New Testament does not mention any case in which a ruling elder thus officiated. See Acts vi. 6, xiii. 1–3, xiv. 23.

[5] Gal. vi. 6.

shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn; and, The laborer is worthy of his reward."[1] "So hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel."[2]

The apostles held a position which no ministers after them could occupy, for they were appointed by our Lord himself to organize the Church. As they were to carry out instructions which they had received from His own lips, and as they were armed with the power of working miracles,[3] they possessed an extraordinary share of personal authority. Aware that their circumstances were peculiar, and that their services would be available till the end of time,[4] they left the ecclesiastical government, as they passed away one after another, to the care of the elders who had meanwhile shared in its administration.[5] As soon as the Church began to assume a settled form, they mingled with these elders on terms of equality; and, as at the Council of Jerusalem,[6] sat with them in the same deliberative assemblies. When Paul addressed the elders of Ephesus for the last time, and took his solemn farewell of them,[7] he commended the Church to their charge, and emphatically pressed upon them the importance of fidelity and vigilance.[8] In his Second Epistle to Timothy, written in the prospect of his martyrdom, he makes no allusion to the expediency of selecting another individual to fill his place. The apostles had fully executed their commission

[1] 1 Tim. v. 18. [2] 1 Cor. ix. 14. [3] Matt. x. 1; 1 Cor. xiv. 18.

[4] "The place which the apostles occupied while they lived is now filled, not by a living order of ministers, but by their own inspired writings, which constitute, or ought to constitute, the supreme authority in the Church of God. . . . . The New Testament Scriptures, as they are the only real apostolate now in existence, so, are sufficient to supply to us the place of the inspired Twelve."—*Litton's Church of Christ*, p. 410.

[5] "While it is clearly recorded that the apostles instituted the orders of presbyters and deacons, it is not so clearly recorded, *indeed it is not recorded at all*, that they instituted the order of bishops."—*Litton*, p. 426. Such a testimony from a Fellow of Oxford is creditable alike to his candor and his intelligence.

[6] Acts xv. 6, xvi. 4, xxi. 18, 25. [7] Acts xx. 17, 25. [8] Acts xx. 29–31.

when, as wise master-builders, they laid the foundation of the Church and fairly exhibited the divine model of the glorious structure; and as no other parties could produce the same credentials, no others could pretend to the same authority. But even the apostles repeatedly testified that they regarded the preaching of the Word as the highest department of their office. It was not as church rulers, but as church teachers, that they were specially distinguished. "We will give ourselves," said they, "continually to prayer, and *to the ministry of the Word*."[1] "Christ sent me," said Paul, "not to baptize, but *to preach the Gospel*."[2] "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should *preach* among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."[3]

[1] Acts vi. 4. "Here," says Mr. Litton, "no mention is made of government or of ordination, as the special prerogative of the apostolic office; *and if it were not dangerous to lay too much stress upon a single passage*, it might from this one be plausibly inferred that *the special function of the apostles, as representatives of the ordinary Christian ministry, has descended*, not to bishops, but *to presbyters*, to whom it specially pertains to give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word."—*Litton's Church of Christ*, p. 407. It is certainly not dangerous to lay as much stress upon any Scripture as it will legitimately bear, and the inference here drawn is in accordance with the rules of the most exact logic.

[2] 1 Cor. i. 17.

[3] Eph. iii. 8. In dealing with individuals, the apostles seldom challenged obedience on the ground of their divine authority. When they are represented as directing the movements of ministers, the language generally implies simply that the parties in question undertook certain services at their instigation or request, or by their advice. Thus, Paul says that he *besought* Timothy to abide at Ephesus, that he *left* Titus in Crete, and that he *sent* Epaphroditus to the Philippians (1 Tim. i. 3; Titus i. 5; Philip. ii. 25). But Paul himself is said to have been *sent forth* to Tarsus *by the brethren* (Acts ix. 30). When Mark refused to accompany Paul and Silas into Asia Minor he did not therefore forfeit his ecclesiastical status (Acts xiii. 13, xv. 37–39). Apart from their special commission, the apostles were entitled to deference from other ministers on account of their superior age and experience; and Paul sometimes refers to this claim. See Philem. 8, 9. On the same ground all who have recently entered the ministry are bound to yield precedence to aged pastors, and to respect their advice. See 1 Peter v. 5.

But though, according to the New Testament, the business of ruling originally formed only a subordinate part of the duty of the church teacher, some have maintained that ecclesiastical government pertains to a higher function than ecclesiastical instruction; and that the apostles instituted a class of spiritual overseers to whose jurisdiction all other preachers are amenable. They imagine that, in the Pastoral Epistles, they find proofs of the existence of such functionaries;[1] and they contend that Timothy and Titus were diocesan bishops, respectively of Ephesus and Crete. But the arguments by which they endeavor to sustain these views are quite inconclusive. Paul says to Timothy, "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that *thou mightest charge* some that *they teach no other doctrine*";[2] and it has hence been inferred that the evangelist was the only minister in the capital of the Proconsular Asia who was sufficiently authorized to oppose heresiarchs. It happens, however, that in this epistle the writer says also to his correspondent, "*Charge them that are rich* in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches";[3] so that, according to the same method of interpretation, Timothy was the only preacher in the place at liberty to admonish the opulent. When Paul subsequently stood face to face with the elders of Ephesus,[4] he told them that it was their common

[1] It can scarcely be necessary to remind the reader that the postscripts to these epistles setting forth that Timothy was "ordained the first bishop of the Church of the Ephesians," and that Titus was "ordained the first bishop of the Church of the Cretians," are spurious. See Period i., sec. ii., chap. i., p. 161.

[2] 1 Tim. i. 3. Paul says (1 Cor. iv. 17) to the *Corinthians*, "I have sent unto you Timotheus, ... who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ"; and, according to the mode of reasoning employed by some, we might infer from this text that Timothy was bishop of Corinth. "It is a suspicious circumstance," says Dr. Burton, "that several persons who are mentioned in the New Testament, are said to have been bishops of the places connected with their names. Thus Cornelius is said to have been bishop of Cæsarea, and to have succeeded Zacchæus, though it is highly improbable that either of them filled such an office."—*Lectures*, i., p. 182.

[3] 1 Tim. vi. 17.

[4] See Period i., sect. i., chap. ix., p. 117.

duty to discountenance and resist false teachers;[1] and he had therefore no idea of intrusting that responsibility to any solitary individual. The reason why the service was pressed specially on Timothy is sufficiently apparent. He had been trained up by Paul himself; he was a young minister remarkable for intelligence, ability, and circumspection; and he was accordingly deemed eminently qualified to deal with the errorists. Hence at this juncture his presence at Ephesus was considered of importance; and the apostle besought him to remain there whilst he himself was absent on another mission.

The argument founded on the instructions addressed to Titus is equally unsatisfactory. Paul says to him, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain[2] elders in every city as I had appointed thee";[3] and from these words the inference has been drawn that to Titus alone was committed the ecclesiastical oversight of all the churches of the island. But the words of the apostle warrant no such sweeping conclusion. Apollos,[4] and perhaps other ministers equal in authority to the evangelist, were now in Crete, and ready to co-operate in the business of church organization. Titus, besides, had no right to act without the concurrence of the people; for, in all cases, even when the apostles were officiating, the church members were consulted in ecclesiastical appointments.[5] It would appear that the evangelist had much administrative ability, and this was obviously the great reason why he was left behind Paul in Crete. The apostle expected that, with his peculiar energy and tact, he would stimulate the zeal of the people, as well as of the other preachers; and thus complete, as speedily as possible, the needful ecclesiastical arrangements.

When Paul once said to the high-priest of Israel, "*Sittest*

[1] Acts xx. 30, 31.

[2] The word καταστήσῃς, here translated "ordain," should rather be rendered *constitute*, or *establish*.

[3] Titus i. 5. [4] Titus iii. 13. [5] Acts vi. 3, xiv. 23; 2 Cor. viii. 19, 23.

thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law"[1]—he had no intention of declaring that the dignitary he addressed was the only member of the Jewish council who had the right of adjudication.[2] The court consisted of at least seventy individuals, every one of whom had a vote as effective as that of the personage with whom he thus remonstrated. It is said that the high-priest at this period was not even the president of the Sanhedrim.[3] Paul was perfectly aware of the constitution of the tribunal to which Ananias belonged; and he merely meant to remind his oppressor that the circumstances in which he was placed added greatly to the iniquity of his present procedure. Though only one of the members of a large judicatory, he was not the less accountable. Thus too, when Jesus said to Paul himself, "I send *thee*" to the Gentiles, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God,"[4] it was certainly not understood that the apostle was to be the only laborer in the wide field of heathendom. The address simply intimated that he was individually commissioned to undertake the service. And though there were other ministers at Ephesus and Crete, Paul reminds Timothy and Titus that he had left them there to perform specific duties, and thus urges upon them the consideration of their personal responsibility. Though surrounded by so many apostles and evangelists, he tells us that there rested on himself daily "the care of all the churches";[5] for he believed that the whole commonwealth of the saints had a claim on his prayers, his sympathy, and his services; and he desired to cherish in the hearts of his young brethren the same feeling of individual obligation. Hence, in these Pastoral Epistles, he gives his correspondents minute instructions respecting all the departments of the ministerial office,

[1] Acts xxiii. 3.

[2] "The whole Sanhedrim were the judges, and sitting to judge him according to the law."—*Alford on Acts* xxiii. 3.

[3] See Prideaux's "Connections," part ii., books 1 and 8.

[4] Acts xxvi. 17, 18. See also, as another illustration, Matt. xvi. 19.

[5] 2 Cor. xi. 28.

and reminds them how much depends on their personal faithfulness. Hence he here points out to them how they are to deport themselves in public and in private;[1] as preachers of the Word, and as members of church judicatories;[2] toward the rich and the poor, masters and slaves, young men and widows.[3] But there is not a single advice addressed to Timothy and Titus in any of these three epistles which may not be appropriately given to any ordinary minister of the Gospel, or which necessarily implies that either of these evangelists exercised exclusive ecclesiastical authority in Ephesus or Crete.[4]

The legend that Timothy and Titus were the bishops respectively of Ephesus and Crete is mentioned first about the beginning of the fourth century, and at a time when the original constitution of the Church had been completely, though silently, revolutionized.[5] It is obvious that, when the Pastoral Epistles were written, these ministers were not permanently located in the places with which their names have been associated.[6] The apostle John resided principally at Ephesus during the last thirty years of the first century;[7] so that, according to this tale, the beloved disciple was under the ecclesiastical supervision of Timothy! The story otherwise exhibits internal marks of absurdity and fabrication. Paul is represented by it as distributing most unequally the burden of

[1] 1 Tim. iv. 12, 13; 2 Tim. ii. 22, 23; Titus ii. 7, 8.

[2] 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2, iv. 16, v. 19, 20, 22; 2 Tim. ii. 2, 15, iv. 2, 5; Titus iii. 8, 9.

[3] 1 Tim. v. 5, 16, vi. 1, 2, 9, 17; Titus ii. 6, 9, 10.

[4] One of the most remarkable instances of an appeal to the sense of individual obligation in a case where many were concerned may be found in Gal. vi. 1.

[5] Whitby, in his "Preface to the Epistle to Titus," says candidly of the allegation that Timothy and Titus were bishops respectively of Ephesus and Crete: "Now, of this matter, I confess I can find nothing in any writer of the first three centuries, nor any intimation that they bore that name."

[6] 1 Tim. i. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 10, 12, 21; Titus i. 5, iii. 12.

[7] Hence Fulgentius speaks of "cathedra Joannis Evangelistæ Ephesi." Lib. "De Trinitate," c. 1. Contradictory traditions sometimes happily annihilate each other. As to the residence of John at Ephesus see Euseb. iii. 23.

official labor; for whilst Timothy presided over the Christians of a single city, Titus was invested with the care of a whole island celebrated in ancient times for its *hundred cities*.[1] It is well known that long after this period, and when the distinction between the president of the presbytery and his elders was fully established, a bishop had the charge of only one church, so that the account of the episcopate of Titus over all Crete must be rejected as a monstrous fiction.

On the occasion of an ambitious request from James and John, our Lord expounded to His apostles one of the great principles of His ecclesiastical polity. "Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. *But so shall it not be among you*, but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister, and whosoever of you will be chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."[2] The teaching elder holds the most honorable position in the Church, simply because his office is the most laborious, the most responsible, and the most useful. And no minister of the Word is warranted to exercise lordship over his brethren, for all are equally the servants of the same Divine Master. He is the greatest who is most willing to humble himself, to spend, and to be spent, that Christ may be exalted. Even the Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister; it was His meat and His drink to do the will of His Father in heaven; He was ready to give instruction to many or to few; at the sea or by the wayside; in the house, the synagogue, or the corn-field; on the mountain or in the desert; when sitting in the company of publicans, or when He had not where to lay His head. He who exhibits most of the spirit and character of the Great Teacher is the most illustrious of Christ's ministers.

The primitive Church was pre-eminently a free society; and, with a view to united action, its members were taught

[1] Homer, "Iliad," ii. v. 156.

[2] Mark x. 42–45.

to consult together respecting all matters of common interest. Whilst the elders were required to beware attempting to domineer over each other, they were also warned against deporting themselves as "lords over God's heritage."[1] All were instructed to be courteous, forbearing, and conciliatory; and each individual was made to understand that he possessed some importance. Though the apostles, as inspired rulers of the Christian commonwealth, might have done many things on their own authority; yet, even in concerns comparatively trivial, as well as in affairs of the greatest consequence, they were guided by the wishes of the people. When an apostle was to be chosen in the place of Judas, the multitude were consulted.[2] When deputies were required to accompany Paul in a journey to be undertaken for the public service, the apostle did not himself select his fellow-travellers, but the churches concerned, proceeded, by a regular vote, to make the appointment.[3] When deacons or elders were to be nominated, the choice rested with the congregation.[4] The records of the apostolic age do not mention any ordinary church functionary who was not called to his office by popular suffrage.[5]

But though, in apostolic times, the laity were thus freely intrusted with the elective franchise, the constitution of the primitive Church was not purely democratic; for as its office-bearers were elected for life, and as its elders or bishops formed a species of spiritual aristocracy, the powers of the people and the rulers were so balanced as to check each other's aberrations, and to promote the healthful action of all parts of the ecclesiastical body. When a deacon or a bishop was elected, he was not permitted, without farther ceremony, to enter upon the duties of his vocation. He was bound to submit himself to the presbytery, that they might ratify the choice by ordination; and this court, by refusing the imposition of hands,

[1] 1 Pet. v. 3.

[2] Acts i. 15, 21–23, 26.

[3] 2 Cor. viii. 19, 23. See also 1 Cor. xvi. 3.

[4] Acts vi. 3, xiv. 23. See also 1 Tim. iii. 10, compared with 1 John iv. 1.

[5] Clemens Romanus states that, in the apostolic age, ecclesiastical appointments were made "with the approbation of the whole church." "Epist. to Corinthians," § 44.

could protect the Church against the intrusion of incompetent or unworthy candidates.[1]

Among the Jews every ordained elder was considered qualified to join in the ordination of others.[2] The same principle was acknowledged in the early Christian Church; and when any functionary was elected, he was introduced to his office by the presbytery of the city or district with which he was connected. There is no instance in the apostolic age in which ordination was conferred by a single individual. Paul and Barnabas were separated to the work to which the Lord had called them by the ministers of Antioch;[3] the first elders of the Christian Churches of Asia Minor were set apart by Paul and Barnabas;[4] Timothy was invested with ecclesiastical authority by "the laying on of the hands of the presbytery";[5] and even the seven deacons were ordained by the twelve apostles acting, for the time, as the presbytery of Jerusalem.[6]

Toward the conclusion of the Epistle to the Romans,[7] Paul mentions Phœbe, "a servant[8] of the Church which is at Cenchrea"; and from this passage some have inferred that the apostles instituted an order of *deaconesses*. We can not well build such an hypothesis on the foundation of a solitary text of doubtful significance. It may be that Phœbe was one of the poor widows supported by the Church;[9] and that, as such, she was employed by the elders in various little services of a confidential or benevolent character. She seems, at one period, to have been in more comfortable circumstances, and she had then distinguished herself by her humane and obliging disposition; for Paul refers apparently to this portion of her history,

[1] Acts vi. 6; 1 Tim. v. 22.

[2] See Selden, "De Synedriis," lib. i. c. 14.

[3] Acts xiii. 1–3. [4] Acts xiv. 23.

[5] 1 Tim. iv. 14. That the preposition *μετὰ* here indicates the instrumental cause, see Acts xiii. 17, xiv. 27.

[6] Acts vi. 6. Some have thought it strange that Paul gives no instructions to Titus respecting the ordination of deacons in Crete. See Titus i. 8. This was unnecessary, as the elders, when ordained, could afterward ordain deacons.

[7] Rom. xvi. 1. [8] *διάκονον.* [9] 1 Tim. v. 3, 4, 9.

when he says, "she hath been a succorer of many, and of myself also."[1]

In the primitive age all the members of the Church were closely associated. As brethren and sisters in the faith they took a deep interest in each other's prosperity; and they regarded the afflictions of any disciple as a calamity which had befallen the society. Each individual was expected in some way to contribute to the well-being of all. Even humble Phœbe was the bearer of an apostolic letter to the Romans; and, on her return to Cenchrea, she could exert a healthful influence among the female disciples by her advice, her example, and her prayers. The industrious scribe rendered good service to the brotherhood by writing out copies of the gospels or epistles; and the pleasant singer, as he joined in the holy psalm, thrilled the hearts of the faithful by his notes of grave sweet melody. By establishing a plurality of both elders and deacons in every worshipping society, the apostles provided more efficiently, as well for its temporal as for its spiritual interests; and the most useful members of the congregation were thus put into positions in which their various graces and endowments were better exhibited and exercised. One deacon attested his fitness for his office by his delicate attentions to the sick, another by his considerate kindness to the poor, and another by his judicious treatment of the indolent, the insincere, and the improvident. One elder excelled as an awakening preacher, another as a sound expositor, and another as a sagacious counsellor; whilst another still, who never ventured to address the congregation, and whose voice was seldom heard at the meetings of the eldership, visited the house of mourning or the chamber of disease, and there poured forth the fulness of his heart in most appropriate and impressive supplications. Every one was taught to appreciate the talents of his neighbor, and to feel that he was, to some extent, dependent on others for his own edification. The preaching elder could not say to the ruling elders, "I have no need of you"; neither could the elders say to the deacons,

[1] Rom. xvi. 2.

"We have no need of you." When the sweet singer was absent, every one admitted that the congregational music was less interesting; when the skilful penman removed to another district, the Church soon began to complain of a scarcity of copies of the sacred manuscripts; and even when the pious widow died in a good old age, the blank was visible, and the loss of a faithful servant of the Church was acknowledged and deplored. "As the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. And the eye can not say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it."[1]

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 12, 21, 26.

CHAPTER III.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

THE Israelites were emphatically "a peculiar people." Though amounting in the days of our Lord to several millions of individuals, they were all the lineal descendants of Abraham; and though two thousand years had passed away since the time of their great progenitor, they had not intermingled, to any considerable extent, with the rest of the human family. The bulk of the nation still occupied the land granted by promise to the "father of the faithful"; the same farms had been held by the same families from age to age; and probably some of the proprietors could boast that their ancestors, fifteen hundred years before, had taken possession of the very fields they now cultivated. They had all one form of worship, one high-priest, and one place of sacrifice. At stated seasons every year all the males of a certain age were required to meet together at Jerusalem, and thus a full representation of the whole race was frequently collected in one great congregation.

The written law of Moses was the sacred bond which united so closely the Church of Israel. The ritual observances of the Hebrews, which had all a typical meaning, are described by the inspired lawgiver with singular minuteness; and any deviation from them was forbidden, not only because it involved an impeachment either of the authority or the wisdom of Jehovah, but also because it was calculated to mar their significance. Under the Mosaic economy, the posterity of Abraham were taught to regard each other as members of the same family; interested, as joint heirs, in the blessings promised to their distinguished ancestor. The Israelites were knit to-

gether by innumerable ties, as well secular as religious; and, when they appeared in one multitudinous assemblage on occasions of peculiar solemnity,[1] they presented a specimen of ecclesiastical unity such as the world has never since contemplated.

Some, however, have contended that the Christian community was originally constructed upon very different principles. According to them the word *church*[2] in the New Testament is always used in one of two senses—either as denoting a single worshipping society, or the whole commonwealth of the faithful; and from this they infer that, in primitive times, every Christian congregation was independent of every other. But such allegations, which are exceedingly improbable in themselves, are found, when carefully investigated, to be totally destitute of foundation. The Church of Jerusalem,[3] with the tens of thousands of individuals belonging to it,[4] must have consisted of several congregations;[5] the Church of Antioch, to which so many prophets and teachers ministered,[6] was in a similar position; and the Church of Palestine[7] comprehended a large number of associated churches. When our Saviour prayed that all His people "may be one,"[8] He indicated that the unity of the Church, so strikingly exhibited in

[1] Such as we find described in Deut. xxxi. 10–12.

[2] In Greek, *ἐκκλησία*. The reference in the text is to its ecclesiastical use, for in the New Testament it sometimes signifies a mob. See Acts xix. 32.

[3] Acts xi. 22, xv. 4.

[4] Acts xxi. 20, *πόσαι μυριάδες*—literally, "how many tens of thousands."

[5] One of these is mentioned Acts xii. 12. [6] Acts xiii. 1.

[7] Acts ix. 31. The true reading here is, "Then had *the church* (*ἐκκλησία*) rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria." This reading is supported by the most ancient manuscripts, including A B C and the Codex Sinaiticus; by the Vulgate, and nearly all the ancient versions, including the old Syriac, Coptic, Sahidic, Ethiopian, Arabic of Erpenius, and Armenian; and by the most distinguished critics, such as Bengel, Kuinoel, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Alford, and Tregelles. It is likewise sustained by the authority of by far the most valuable cursive MS. in existence. See Scrivener's "Codex Augiensis," Introd. lxviii. and p. 425. Cambridge, 1859. See another case mentioned in the note 2, p. 72 of this volume, in which "the church" means "the apostles and elders."

[8] John xvii. 21.

the nation of Israel, should still be studied and maintained; and when Paul describes the household of faith, he speaks of it, not as a loose mass of independent congregations, but as a "body fitly *joined together and compacted* by that which every *joint* supplieth."[1] The apostle here refers to the vital union of believers by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost; but he alludes also to those "bands" of outward ordinances, and "joints"[2] of visible confederation, by which their communion is upheld; for, were the Church split into an indefinite number of insulated congregations, even the unity of the spirit could neither be distinctly ascertained nor properly cultivated. When influenced by the spirit of Divine Love, the machinery of the Church moves in admirable harmony and accomplishes the most astonishing results; but, when pervaded by another spirit, it is strained and dislocated, and in danger of dashing itself to pieces.

Those who hold that every congregation, however small, is a complete church in itself, are quite unable to explain why the system of ecclesiastical organization should be thus circumscribed. The New Testament inculcates the unity of all the faithful, as well as the unity of particular societies; and the same principle of Christian brotherhood which prompts a number of individuals to meet together for religious fellowship, should also lead a number of congregations in the same locality to fraternize. The Twelve may be regarded as the representatives of the doctrine of ecclesiastical confederation, for, though they were commanded to go into all the world, and to preach the Gospel to every creature, yet, as long as circumstances permitted, they continued to co-operate. "When the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, *they sent* unto them Peter and John";[3] and, at a subsequent period, they concurred in *sending "forth* Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch."[4] These facts

[1] Eph. iv. 16. [2] See Col. ii. 19. [3] Acts viii. 14.

[4] Acts xi. 22. "No notion is more at variance with the spirit of apostolic Christianity than that of societies of Christians existing in the same neighborhood, but not in communion with each other, and not under a common government."—*Litton*, p. 450.

distinctly prove that they had a common interest in everything pertaining to the well-being of the whole Christian commonwealth; and that, like Paul, they were intrusted with "the care of all the churches." Nor did the early Christian congregations act independently. They believed that union is strength, and they were "knit together" in ecclesiastical relationship. Hence we read of the brother who was "chosen of the churches" [1] to travel with the Apostle Paul. It is now impossible to determine in what way this choice was made—whether at a general meeting of deputies from different congregations, or by a separate vote in each particular society—but, in whatever way the election was accomplished, the appointment of one representative for several churches was itself a recognition of their ecclesiastical unity.

We have seen that the worship of the Church was much the same as the worship of the synagogue,[2] and it would appear that its polity also was borrowed from the institutions of the chosen people.[3] Every Jewish congregation was governed by a bench of elders, and in every city there was a smaller sanhedrim, or presbytery, consisting of twenty-three members,[4] to which the neighboring synagogues were subject. Jerusalem had two of these smaller sanhedrims, as it was found that the multitudes of cases arising among so vast a population were more than sufficient to occupy the time of any one judicatory. Appeals lay from all these tribunals to the Great Sanhedrim, or "Council," so frequently mentioned in the New Testament.[5] This court consisted of seventy or seventy-two members, made up, perhaps, in equal portions, of chief priests,

[1] 2 Cor. viii. 19.

[2] Period i., sec. iii., chap. i., p. 191.

[3] "That the Church did really derive its polity from the synagogue is a fact upon the proof of which, in the present state of theological learning, it is needless to expend many words."—*Litton's Church of Christ*, p. 254.

[4] See Selden, "De Synedriis," lib. ii., c. 5; Lightfoot's "Works," iii. 242, and xi. 179. Josephus says that Moses appointed only seven judges in every city. "Antiq." book iv., c. 8, § 14. See, also, "Wars of the Jews,' ii., c. 20, § 5.

[5] Luke xxii. 66; Acts v. 21, vi. 15. See, also, Prideaux, part ii., book vii., and Lightfoot's "Works," ix. 342.

scribes, and elders of the people.[1] The chief priests were probably twenty-four in number—each of the twenty-four courses, into which the sacerdotal order was divided,[2] thus furnishing one representative. The scribes were the men of learning, like Gamaliel,[3] who had devoted themselves to the study of the Jewish law, and who possessed recondite, as well as extensive information. The elders were laymen of reputed wisdom and experience, who, in practical matters, were expected to give sound advice.[4] It was not strange that the Jews had so profound a regard for their Great Sanhedrim. In the days of our Lord and His apostles it had, indeed, miserably degenerated; but, at an earlier period, its members were eminently entitled to respect, as in point of intelligence, prudence, piety, and patriotism, they held the very highest place among their countrymen.

The details of the ecclesiastical polity of the ancient Israelites are involved in much obscurity; but the preceding statements may be received as a pretty accurate description of its chief outlines. Our Lord himself, in the sermon on the mount, refers to the great council and its subordinate judicatories;[5] and, in the Old Testament, appeals from inferior tribunals to the authorities in the holy city are explicitly enjoined.[6] All the synagogues, not only in Palestine, but in foreign countries, obeyed the orders of the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem;[7] and it constituted a court of review to which all other ecclesiastical arbiters yielded submission.

In the government of the Apostolic Church we may trace a resemblance to these arrangements. Every Christian congregation, like every synagogue, had its elders; and every city had its presbytery, consisting of the spiritual rulers of the district. In the introductory chapters of the book of the Acts we discover the germ of this ecclesiastical constitution; for we

[1] Matt. xvi. 21, xxvi. 59; Mark xv. 1. See, also, Lightfoot's "Works," iv. 223.

[2] 1 Chron. xxiv. 4, 7–18. [3] Acts v. 34.

[4] As they represented the people, and were probably twenty-four in number, there may be a reference to them in Rev. iv. 4.

[5] Matt. v. 22. [6] Deut. xvii. 8–10; 2 Chron. xix. 8–11; Ps. cxxii. 5.

[7] Acts ix. 1, 2, 14.

there find the apostles ministering to thousands of converts, and, as the presbytery of Jerusalem, ordaining deacons, exercising discipline, and sending out missionaries.[1] The prophets and teachers of Antioch performed the same functions;[2] Titus was instructed to have elders established, or a presbytery constituted, in every city of Crete;[3] and Timothy was ordained by such a judicatory.[4] For the first thirty years after the death of our Lord a large proportion of the ministers of the Gospel were Jews by birth, and as they were in the habit of going up to Jerusalem to celebrate the great festivals, they appear to have taken advantage of the opportunity, and to have held meetings in the holy city for consultation respecting the affairs of the Christian commonwealth. Prudence and convenience conspired to dictate this course, as they could then reckon upon finding there a considerable number of able and experienced elders, and as their presence in the Jewish metropolis on such occasions was fitted to awaken no suspicion.[5]

We thus see that the transaction mentioned in the 15th chapter of the Acts admits of a simple and satisfactory explanation. When the question respecting the circumcision of the Gentile converts began to be discussed at Antioch, there were individuals in that city as well qualified as any in Jerusalem to pronounce upon its merits; for the Church there enjoyed the ministry of prophets; and Paul, its most distinguished teacher, was "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles." But the parties proceeded in the matter in much the same way as Israelites were accustomed to act under similar circumstances. Had a controversy relative to any Mosaic ceremony divided the Jewish population of Antioch, they would have appealed for a decision to their Great Sanhedrim; and when this dispute distracted the Christians of the capital of Syria, they had recourse to another tribunal at Jerusalem which they considered competent to pronounce a de-

[1] Acts ii. 14, 41, 42, iv. 4, 32, 33, 35, v. 14, 42, vi. 6, 7, viii. 14.
[2] Acts xiii. 1, 3. [3] Titus i. 5. [4] 1 Tim. iv. 14.
[5] In the same way the Puritans, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, frequently held meetings in London during the sittings of Parliament. See Collier, vii. 33, 64.

liverance.[1] This tribunal consisted virtually of the rulers of the universal Church; for the apostles, who had a commission to all the world, and elders from almost every place where a Christian congregation existed, were in the habit of repairing to the capital of Palestine. In one respect this judicatory differed from the Jewish council, for it was not limited to seventy members. In accordance with the free spirit of the Gospel dispensation, it consisted of as many ecclesiastical rulers as could conveniently attend its meetings. But the times were perilous; and the ministers of the early Christian Church did not deem it expedient to congregate in very large numbers.

A single Scripture precedent for the regulation of the Church is as decisive as a multitude; and though the New Testament distinctly records only one instance[2] in which a question of difficulty was referred by a lower to a higher ecclesiastical tribunal, this case sufficiently illustrates the character of the primitive polity. A very substantial reason can be given why Scripture takes so little notice of the meetings of Christian judicatories. The different portions of the New Testament were put into circulation as soon as written; and though it was most important that the heathen should be made acquainted with the doctrines of the Church, it was not by any means expedient that their attention should be particularly directed to the machinery by which it was regulated. An accurate knowledge of its constitution must have exposed it more fearfully to the attacks of persecuting Emperors. Every effort would have been made to discover the times and places of the meetings of pastors and teachers, and to inflict

[1] For a more particular account of the constitution of the meeting mentioned in the 15th chapter of the Acts, see Period i., sec. i., chap. v., p. 72.

[2] We read in Acts xxi. 18, of another meeting of elders at Jerusalem at the time of one of the great festivals. See Acts xx. 16. Eusebius tells ("Ecc. Hist." iii. 11) how the surviving apostles and disciples "*from all parts*" met at Jerusalem after its destruction by Titus, and appointed Simeon to preside over the Church there. The story, though garbled, probably rests on some basis of truth, as a meeting of apostles and elders, in all likelihood, may have occurred about the time mentioned.

a deadly wound on the Church by the destruction of its office-bearers. Hence, in general, its courts assembled privately; and thus it is that, for the first three centuries, so little is known of the proceedings of these conventions.

In the first century, when the rulers of the Church met for consultation, they all sat in the same assembly. When the ecclesiastical constitution was fairly settled, even the Twelve were disposed to waive their personal claims to precedence, and to assume the status of ordinary ministers. We find, accordingly, that there were then no higher and lower houses of convocation; for "the apostles and elders came together."[1] Some who suppose that the James mentioned in Acts xv. 13 was the first bishop of the holy city, imagine that in his manner of giving the advice adopted at the Synod of Jerusalem, they can detect marks of his prelatic influence.[2] But the sacred narrative, when candidly interpreted, merely shows that he acted on the occasion as a judicious counsellor. He was, assuredly, not entitled to dictate to Paul or Peter. The reasoning of those who maintain that, as a matter of right, he expected the meeting to yield to the weight of his official authority, proves, not that he was bishop of the Jewish capital, but that he was the prince of the apostles.

The New Testament history speaks frequently of James, the brother of John, and extends over the whole period of his public career; but it never once hints that he was bishop of Jerusalem. The James who has left behind him an epistle addressed "to the twelve tribes scattered abroad," and who by some has been identified as our Lord's brother, makes no allusion to his possession of any such office. Paul, who often visited the mother Church during the time of this alleged

[1] Acts xv. 6.

[2] Acts xv. 19. "James, according to the somewhat pompous rendering in our English version, says, 'Wherefore *my sentence is*'—in the original—διὸ ἐγὼ κρίνω—a common formula by which the members of the Greek assemblies introduced the expression of their individual opinion, as appears from its repeated occurrence in Thucydides, with which may be compared the corresponding Latin phrase (*sic censeo*) of frequent use in Cicero's orations."—*Alexander on the Acts*, ii., p. 83.

episcopate, is equally silent upon the subject. But it is easy to understand how the story originated. The command to the apostles, "Go ye unto all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature,"[1] did not imply that their countrymen at home were not to enjoy a portion of their ministrations; and it may have been considered expedient that a minister of great weight of character should reside in the Jewish capital. This field of exertion may have been assigned to James, the brother of John. Others travelled to distant countries, to disseminate the truth; and as after the martyrdom mentioned in Acts xii. 2, James, the Lord's brother, was probably the most influential individual who could ordinarily be consulted in the holy city, he soon became the ruling spirit among the Christians of that crowded metropolis. In all cases of importance and of difficulty his advice was sought and appreciated; and his age, experience, and rank as the near relative of our Lord,[2] suggested the propriety of his appointment as president of any ecclesiastical meeting he attended. The precedence thus so generally conceded to him was remembered in after-times when the hierarchical spirit began to dominate; and afforded a basis for the legend that he was the first bishop of Jerusalem. And as he commonly occupied the chair when the rulers of the Church assembled there at the annual festivals, we see too why he is also called "bishop of bishops" in documents of high antiquity.[3]

During a considerable part of the first century Jerusalem contained a much greater number of disciples than any other city in the Roman Empire; and until shortly before its destruction by Titus in A.D. 70, it continued to be the centre of Christian influence. For some time all matters in dispute

[1] Mark xvi. 15.

[2] The James, who is called an apostle, who in after-times was represented as the first bishop of Jerusalem, and who in Galatians i. 19 is styled "the Lord's brother," was probably not one of the Twelve. His conversion appears to have taken place about the time of the resurrection. See before p. 33.

[3] See the spurious epistle of Clement to James, prefixed to the Clementine Homilies. Cotelerius, "Pat. Apost.," vol. i., p. 617.

throughout the Church, which could not be settled by inferior judicatories, were decided by the apostles and elders there convened. But the rapid propagation of Christianity, the rise of persecution, and the progress of political events, soon rendered such procedure inconvenient, if not impracticable. Persons of Gentile extraction in distant lands, and in humble circumstances, could not be expected to travel for redress of their ecclesiastical grievances to the ancient capital of Palestine; and, when the temple was destroyed, the myriads who had formerly repaired to it to celebrate the sacred feasts discontinued their attendance. The Christian communities throughout the Empire about this period began to assume that form which they present in the following century, the congregations of each province associating together for their better government and discipline. There are not wanting evidences, as we shall now endeavor to show, that the apostles themselves suggested the arrangement.

It has been taken for granted by many that when Paul, on his arrival at Miletus, "sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the Church,"[1] he convoked a meeting only of the ecclesiastical rulers of the chief city of the Proconsular Asia. But a more attentive examination of the passage in which the transaction is described may lead us to infer that the Christian elders of the surrounding district, as well as of the capital, were requested to meet him at Miletus. Such a conclusion is sustained by the reason assigned for his mode of proceeding at this juncture. Ephesus was a seaport thirty miles from Miletus, and he did not touch at it, "because *he would not spend the time in Asia*, for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost."[2] But, had he merely wished to see the elders of this provincial metropolis, his visit to it need have created no delay, for he might have gone to it as quickly as the messenger who was the bearer of his communication. He felt, however, that, had he appeared there, he would have given offence had he not also favored the Christian communities in its neighborhood

[1] Acts xx. 17. [2] Acts xx. 16.

with his presence; and as he could not afford to stop so long in Asia, he adopted the expedient of inviting all the elders of the district to repair to the place where he now sojourned.[1] From Ephesus, the capital, his invitation could be readily transmitted to other provincial cities. The address which he delivered to the assembled elders conveys the impression that they did not all belong to the metropolis, and its very first sentence suggests such an inference. "When they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know from the first day that I came *into Asia* after what manner I have been *with you* at all seasons."[2] The evangelist informs us that he had spent only two years and three months at Ephesus,[3] and yet he here tells his audience that "by the space of *three years*" he had not ceased to warn every one night and day with tears.[4] He says also, "I know that *ye all among whom I have gone* preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more"[5]—thereby intimating that his auditors were not resident in one locality. We have also distinct evidence that when Paul formerly ministered at Ephesus, there were Christian societies throughout the province, for in his First Epistle to the Corinthians written from that city,[6] he sends his correspondents the salutations of "the Churches of Asia."[7] These Churches must have been united by the ties of Christian fellowship; and the apostle was in close communication with them when he was thus employed as the medium of conveyance for the expression of their evangelical attachment.

In other parts of the New Testament there are traces of consociation among the primitive Churches. Thus Paul, their founder, sends to "the Churches of Galatia"[8] a common letter in which he requires them to "serve one another,"[9] and to

[1] The view here taken is corroborated by the authority of Irenæus, iii., c. 14, § 2: "In Mileto enim convocatis episcopis et presbyteris, qui erant ab Epheso, *et a reliquis proximis civitatibus*," etc.

[2] Acts xx. 18. [3] Acts xix. 8, 10. [4] Acts xx. 31.

[5] Acts xx. 25. Demetrius says to the craftsmen: "Ye see and hear that *not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia*, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people." Acts xix. 26.

[6] See Period i., sec. i., chap. viii., p. 109. [7] 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

[8] Gal. i. 2. [9] Gal. v. 13.

"bear one another's burdens."[1] Without some species of united action, the Galatians could not well have obeyed such admonitions. Peter also, when writing to the disciples "scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,"[2] represents them as an associated body. "The elders," says he, "which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder . . . . feed *the flock of God* which is among you, taking the oversight thereof."[3] This "flock of God," which was evidently equivalent to the "Church of God,"[4] was spread over a large territory; and yet the apostle suggests that the elders were conjointly charged with its supervision. Had the Churches scattered throughout so many provinces been a multitude of independent congregations, Peter would not have described them as one "flock" of which these rulers had the oversight.

But, though the elders of congregations in adjoining provinces could maintain ecclesiastical intercourse, and meet at least occasionally or by delegates, it was otherwise with Churches in different countries. Even these, however, cultivated the communion of saints; for they corresponded with each other by letters or deputations. The attentive reader of the inspired epistles may observe how the apostles contrived to keep open a door of access to their converts by means of itinerating preachers;[5] and the same agency was continued in succeeding generations. Disciples travelling into strange lands were furnished with "epistles of commendation"[6] to

[1] Gal. vi. 2. [2] 1 Pet. i. 1. [3] 1 Pet. v. 1, 2.

[4] In Acts xx. 28, these designations are identical. The exhortation in 1 Pet. v. 5—"Yea, all of you *be subject one to another*"—is obviously addressed to *ministers*, and implies their mutual subordination. This command can be acted upon only by ministers who are confederated and who hold the same ecclesiastical status. Lachmann adopts a somewhat different reading of this verse without changing the sense, for he puts a semi-period after ἀντίτασσεται. According to his Larger Edition of the Greek Testament, the commencement of the verse should be rendered thus: "Likewise ye younger (presbyters) submit yourselves unto the elder, AND ALL TO ONE ANOTHER." I here suppose *presbyters* to be understood, as the apostle is speaking to them in all the preceding part of the chapter.

[5] 2 Cor. viii. 5, 18, 22; Phil. ii. 25, 28; Col. iv. 7–9; 2 Tim. iv. 9–12.

[6] 2 Cor. iii. 1.

the foreign Churches; and Christian teachers, who had these credentials, were permitted freely to officiate in the congregations which they visited. During the lives of the apostles, there were preachers, in whom they had no confidence, who were yet in full standing, and who went from place to place addressing apostolic Churches. Having found their way into the ministry in a particular locality, they set out to other regions provided with their "letters of commendation"; and, on the strength of these testimonials, were readily recognized as heralds of the cross. The apostles deemed it prudent to advise their correspondents not to rest satisfied with the certificates of these itinerant evangelists, but to try them by a more certain standard. "If there come any unto you," says John, "and *bring not this doctrine*, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed."[1]—"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world."[2] Strange as it may appear, even some of the apostles had personal enemies among the primitive preachers, and yet when these proclaimed the truth, they were suffered to proceed without interruption. "Some indeed," says Paul, "preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good-will. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, *supposing to add affliction to my bonds;* but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the Gospel. What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."[3]

The preceding statements enable us to appreciate the unity of the Apostolic Church. This unity was not perfect; for there were false brethren who stirred up strife, and false teachers who fomented divisions. But these elements of discord no more disturbed the general unity of the Church than the presence of a few empty or blasted ears of corn affects the productiveness of an abundant harvest. As a body, the disciples of Christ were never so united as in the first century.

[1] 2 John 10. [2] 1 John iv. 1. [3] Phil. i. 15–18.

Heresy had yet made little impression; schism was scarcely known; and charity, exerting her gentle influence with the brotherhood, found it comparatively easy to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. The members of the Church had "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." But their unity was very different from uniformity. They had no canonical hours, no clerical costume, no liturgies. The prayers of ministers and people varied according to circumstances, and were dictated by their hopes and fears, their wants and sympathies. When they met for worship, the devotional exercises were conducted in a language intelligible to all; when the Scriptures were read in their assemblies, every one heard in his own tongue the wonderful works of God. The unity of the Apostolic Church did not consist in its subordination to any one visible head or supreme pontiff; for neither Peter nor Paul, nor James nor John pretended to be the governor of the household of faith. Its unity was not like the unity of a jail where all the prisoners wear the same dress, and receive the same rations, and dwell in cells of the same construction, and submit to the orders of the same keeper; but like the unity of a cluster of stalks of corn, all springing from one prolific grain, and all rich with a golden produce. Or it may be likened to the unity of the ocean, where all the parts are not of the same depth, or the same color, or the same temperature; but where all, pervaded by the same saline preservative, ebb and flow according to the same heavenly laws, and concur in bearing to the ends of the earth the blessings of civilization and of happiness.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ANGELS OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

THE Apocalypse is a book of symbols. The light which we obtain from it may well remind us of the instruction communicated to the Israelites by the ceremonies of the law. The Mosaic institutions imparted to a Jew the knowledge of an atonement and a Saviour; but he could scarcely have undertaken to explain, with accuracy and precision, their individual significance, as their meaning was not fully developed until the times of the Messiah. So is it with "the Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass," and which "he sent and signified by his angel unto his servant John."[1] The Church here sees as "through a glass darkly," the transactions of her future history; and she can here distinctly discern the ultimate triumph of her principles, so that, in days of adversity, she is encouraged and sustained; but she can not speak with confidence of the import of much of this mysterious record; and it would seem as if the actual occurrence of the events foretold were to supply the only safe key for the interpretation of some of its strange imagery.

In the beginning of this book we have an account of a glorious vision presented to the beloved disciple. He was instructed to write down what he saw, and to send it to the Seven Churches in Asia, "unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."[2] A vision so extraordinary as that which he describes, must have left upon his

[1] Rev. i. 1.

[2] Rev. i. 11.

mind a permanent and most vivid impression. "I saw," says he, "*seven golden candlesticks*, and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters—and *he had in his right hand seven stars*, and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." [1]

In the foreground of this picture the Son of God stands conspicuous. His dress corresponds to that of the Jewish high-priest, and the whole description of His person has obviously a reference, either to His own divine perfections, or to His offices as the Saviour of sinners. He himself is the expositor of two of the most remarkable of the symbols. "The seven stars," says He, "are the angels of the Seven Churches, and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are the Seven Churches." [2]

But though the symbol of the stars has been thus interpreted by Christ, the interpretation itself has been the subject of considerable discussion. Much difficulty has been experienced in identifying the angels of the Seven Churches; and there have been various conjectures as to the station which they occupied, and the duties which they performed. According to some they were literally angelic beings who had the special charge of the Seven Churches.[3] According to others, the angel of a Church betokens the collective body of ministers connected with the society. But such explanations are very far from satisfactory. The Scriptures nowhere teach that each Christian community is under the care of its own angelic guardian; neither is it to be supposed that an angel

[1] Rev. i. 12–16. [2] Rev. i. 20.

[3] This was the opinion of Gregory Nazianzen, as well as others. There is an ingenious article on this subject in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for April, 1855. Its author, the Rev. Isaac Jennings, advocates the view propounded in this chapter.

represents the ministry of a Church, for one symbol would not be interpreted by another symbol of dubious signification. It is clear that the angel of the Church is a single individual, and a personage well known to the body with which he was connected at the time when the Apocalypse was written.

It has often been asserted that the title "The angel of the Church" is borrowed from the designation of one of the ministers of the synagogue.[1] This point, however, has never been fairly demonstrated. In later times there was, no doubt, in the synagogue an individual known by the name of the *legate*, or the *angel;* but there is no decisive evidence that an official with such a designation existed in the first century. In the New Testament we have repeated references to the office-bearers of the synagogue; we are told of the rulers[2] or elders, the reader,[3] and the minister[4] or deacon; but the angel is never mentioned. Philo and Josephus are equally silent upon the subject. It is, therefore, extremely doubtful whether a minister with this title was known among the Jews in the days of the apostles.

Even granting, what is so very problematical, that there were in the synagogues in the first century individuals distinguished by the designation of angels, it is still exceedingly questionable whether the angels of the Seven Churches borrowed their names from these functionaries. If so, the angel of the Church occupied the same position as the angel of the synagogue, for the adoption of the same title indicated the possession of the same office. But it was the duty of the angel of the synagogue to offer up the prayers of the assembly;[5] and as, in all the synagogues, there was worship at the same hour,[6] he could be the minister of only one congrega-

[1] This is the opinion of Prideaux, Vitringa, and many others. See Prid. "Connec." part. i., book vi.; and Vitringa, "De Synagoga," lib. iii., par. 2, cap. 3.

[2] Acts xiii. 15. [3] Luke iv. 16. [4] Luke iv. 20.

[5] Prideaux, part i., book vi., vol. i., p. 385. Edit. London, 1716.

[6] "The hours of public devotions in them on their synagogue days were, as to morning and evening prayers, the same hours in which the morning and evening sacrifices were offered up at the temple."—*Prideaux*, part i., book vi.

tion. If, then, the angel of the Church discharged the same functions as the angel of the synagogue, it follows that, toward the termination of the first century, there was only one Christian congregation in each of the seven cities of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. It may, however, be fairly questioned whether the number of disciples in every one of these places was then so limited as such an inference suggests. In Laodicea, and in one or two of the other cities,[1] there may have been only a single congregation; but it is scarcely probable that all the brethren in Ephesus still met together in one assembly. About forty years before, the Word of God "grew mightily and prevailed"[2] in that great metropolis; and, among its inhabitants, Paul had persuaded "much people"[3] to become disciples of Christ. But if the angel of the Church derived his title from the angel of the synagogue, and if the position of these two functionaries was the same, we are shut up to the conclusion that there was now only one congregation in the capital of the Proconsular Asia. The angel could not be in two places at the same time; and, as it was his duty to offer up the prayers of the assembled worshippers, it was impossible for him to minister to two congregations.

These considerations abundantly attest the futility of the imagination that the angel of the Church was a diocesan bishop. The office of the angel of the synagogue had, in fact, no resemblance whatever to that of a prelate. The rank of the ancient Jewish functionary was similar to that of a precentor in some of our Protestant churches; and when set forms of prayer were introduced among the Israelites, it was his duty to read them aloud in the congregation. The angel was not the chief ruler of the synagogue; he occupied a subordinate position; and was amenable to the authority of the

[1] Maurice in his work on Diocesan Episcopacy in reply to Clarkson, admits (p. 257) that in our Saviour's time, Laodicea had "but few inhabitants." Philadelphia is described by Strabo, as a place with a small population.

[2] Acts xix. 20. [3] Acts xix. 26.

bench of elders.[1] It is in vain, then, to attempt to recognize the predecessors of our modern diocesans in the angels of the Seven Churches. Had bishops been originally called angels, they never would have parted with so complimentary a designation. Had the Spirit of God in the Apocalypse bestowed upon them such a title, it never would have been laid aside. When, about a century after this period, we begin to discover distinct traces of a hierarchy, an extreme anxiety is discernible to find for it something like a footing in the days of the apostles; but, strange to say, the earliest prelates of whom we read are not known by the name of angels.[2] If such a nomenclature existed in the time of the Apostle John, it passed away at once and forever! No trace of it can be detected even in the second century. It is thus apparent that, whatever the angels of the Seven Churches may have been, they certainly were *not* diocesan bishops.

The place where these angels are to be found in the apocalyptic scene also suggests the fallacy of the interpretation that they are the chief pastors of the Seven Churches. The stars are seen, not distributed over the seven candlesticks, but collected together in the hand of Christ. Though the angels are in some way related to the Churches, the relation is such that they may be separated without inconvenience. What, then, can these angels be? How do they happen to possess the name they bear? Why are they gathered into the right hand of the Son of Man? All these questions admit of a very plain and satisfactory solution.

[1] Prideaux speaks of the angel of the synagogue, in relation to the rulers, as "*next to them*, or perchance one of them." Part i., book vi., vol. i., p. 385.

[2] It never occurred to Tertullian that the angels of the Churches were bishops. He obviously considered the angel of the Church an invisible intelligence. Thus he says of Paul, "Lusit igitur et de suo spiritu, et de ecclesiæ angelo, et de virtute Domini, si quod de consilio eorum pronunciaverat rescidit."—*De Pudicitia*, c. xiv. ad finem. See also Tertullian, "De Baptismo," c. vi. Such, too, was the opinion of Origen, "De Principiis," lib. i., c. 8, and "De Oratione," 11. The fact that, *long after the hierarchy was formed*, in two or three rare cases a bishop is called an angel, in reference to the angels of the Apocalypse, is nothing to the purpose. See Bingham, i. 79.

An angel literally signifies a *messenger*, and these angels were simply the messengers of the Seven Churches. John had long resided at Ephesus; and now that he was banished to the Isle of Patmos "for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ," the Christian communities among which he had ministered so many years, sent trusty deputies to visit him, to assure him of their sympathy, and to tender to him their friendly offices. In primitive times such angels were often sent to the brethren in confinement or in exile. Thus, Paul, when in imprisonment at Rome, says to the Philippians, "Ye have well done that ye did communicate with my affliction. . . . . I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you."[1] Here Epaphroditus is presented to us as the angel of the Church of Philippi. This minister seems, indeed, to have spent no small portion of his time in travelling between Rome and Macedonia. Hence Paul observes, "I supposed it necessary *to send to you* Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labor and fellow-soldier, but *your messenger* and *he that ministered to my wants*."[2] In like manner, the individuals selected to convey to the poor saints in Jerusalem the contributions of the Gentile converts in Greece and Asia Minor, are called "the *messengers* of the Churches."[3] The practice of sending messengers to visit and comfort the saints in poverty, in confinement, or in exile, may be traced for centuries in the history of the Church; and, in other parts of the New Testament as well as in the Revelation, an individual sent on a special errand is repeatedly called an angel. Thus, John the Baptist, who was commissioned to announce the approach of the Messiah, is styled God's angel,[4] or messenger, and the spies, sent to view the land of Canaan, are distinguished by the same designation.[5]

Toward the close of the first century the Apostle John must have been regarded with extraordinary veneration by his Chris-

[1] Phil. iv. 14, 18. [2] Phil. ii. 25.

[3] 2 Cor. viii. 23, ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν. In after-times it was deemed proper that these messengers should be of the clerical order. See Cyprian, epist xxiv., lxxv., and lxxix.

[4] Luke vii. 27, τὸν ἄγγελόν μου. [5] James ii. 25, τοὺς ἀγγέλους.

tian brethren. He was the last survivor of a band of men who had laid the foundations of the New Testament Church; and he was himself one of the most honored members of the little fraternity, for he had enjoyed peculiarly intimate fellowship with his Divine Master. Our Lord, "in the day of his flesh," had permitted him to lean upon His bosom; and he is described by the pen of inspiration as "*the* disciple whom Jesus loved."[1] All accounts concur in representing him as most amiable and warm-hearted; and as he had now far outlived the ordinary term of human existence, the snows of age imparted additional interest to a personage otherwise exceedingly attractive. Such a man was not permitted in apostolic times to pine away unheeded in solitary exile. The small island which was the place of his banishment was only a short distance from the Asiatic metropolis, and the other six cities named in the Apocalypse were all in the same district as Ephesus. It was, therefore, by no means extraordinary that seven messengers from seven neighboring Churches, to all of which he was well known, are found together in Patmos on a visit to the venerable confessor.

This explanation satisfies all the conditions required by the laws of interpretation. Whilst it reveals concern for the welfare of John quite in keeping with the benevolent spirit of apostolic times, it is also simple and sufficient. In prophetic language a *star* usually signifies a *ruler*, and the angels sent to Patmos were selected from among the elders, or rulers, of the Churches with which they were respectively connected; for, it is well known that, at an early period, elders, or presbyters, were frequently appointed to act as messengers or commissioners.[2] We thus understand, too, why the letters are addressed to the angels, for in this case they were the official organs of communication between the apostle and the religious societies which they had been deputed to represent. The instructions

[1] John xxi. 7, 20.

[2] Thus Hippolytus speaks of a certain elder, named Hyacinthus, who was sent to the governor of Sardinia with a letter for the release of the Christians banished there. "Philosophumena," p. 288. The *lerate* of the bishop of Rome is a species of memorial of the angel of the ancient Church.

contained in the epistles were designed, not merely for the angels individually, but for the communities of which they were members; and hence the exhortation with which each of them concludes: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto *the Churches*."[1] When the apostle was honored with the vision, he was directed to write out an account of what he saw, and to "*send it* unto the Seven Churches which are in Asia";[2] and this interpretation explains how he transmitted the communication; for, as Christ is said to have "*sent* and signified" His Revelation "*by his angel* unto his servant John,"[3] so John, in his turn, conveyed it by the *seven angels* to the Seven Churches. It was, no doubt, thought that the messengers undertook a most perilous errand when they engaged to visit a distinguished Christian minister who had been driven into banishment by a jealous tyrant; but they are taught by the vision that they are under the special care of Him who is "the Prince of the kings of the earth"; for the Saviour appears holding them in His right hand as He walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. When bearing consolation to the aged minister, each one of them could enjoy the comfort of the promise, "Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, *I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands*."[4]

It has often been thought singular that only *seven* Churches of the Proconsular Asia are here addressed, as it is well known that, at this period, there were several other Christian societies in the same province. Thus, in the immediate neighborhood of Laodicea were the Churches of Colosse and Hierapolis;[5] and in the vicinity of Ephesus, perhaps the Churches of Tralles and Magnesia. But the seven angels mentioned by John were perhaps the only ecclesiastical messengers in Patmos at the time of the vision; and they may have been the organs of communication with a greater number of Churches than those which they directly represented. Seven was re-

[1] Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 29, iii. 6, 13, 22. [2] Rev. i. 11. [3] Rev. i. 1.
[4] Isa. xlix. 15, 16.
[5] The Christians of Hierapolis are mentioned Col. iv. 13.

garded by the Jews as the symbol of perfection; and it is remarkable that, on another occasion noticed in the New Testament,[1] exactly seven messengers were deputed by the Churches of Greece and Asia Minor to convey their contributions to the indigent disciples in Jerusalem. There are, too, grounds for believing that these seven religious societies, in their varied character and prospects, are emblems of the Church universal. The instructions addressed to the disciples in these seven cities of Asia were designed for the benefit of "THE CHURCHES" of all countries as well as of all succeeding generations; and the whole imagery indicates that the vision is to be thus interpreted. The Son of Man does not confine His care to the Seven Churches of Asia, for He who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks is the same who said of old to the nation of Israel, "I will set up my tabernacle among you, and my soul shall not abhor you, and *I will walk among you*, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people."[2] In the vision, the "countenance" of the Saviour is said to have been "as the sun shineth in his strength";[3] and the prayer of the Church catholic is: "God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and *cause his face to shine upon us*, that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations."[4]

The preceding statements demonstrate the folly of attempting to construct a system of ecclesiastical polity from such a highly-figurative portion of Scripture as the Apocalypse. In the angel of the Church some have discovered the moderator of a presbytery; others, the bishop of a diocese; and others, the minister of an Irvingite congregation. But the basis on which all such theories are founded is a mere blunder as to the significance of an ecclesiastical title. The angels of the Seven Churches were neither moderators, nor diocesans, nor precentors, but messengers sent on an errand of love to an apostle in tribulation.

[1] Acts xx. 4. [2] Lev. xxvi. 11, 12. [3] Rev. i. 16. [4] Ps. lxvii. 1, 2.

PERIOD II.

FROM THE DEATH OF THE APOSTLE JOHN TO THE CONVERSION OF CONSTANTINE, A.D. 100 TO A.D. 312.

SECTION I.

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH.

THE dawn of the second century was full of promise to the Church. On the death of Domitian in A.D. 96, the Roman Empire enjoyed for a short time[1] the administration of the mild and equitable Nerva. This prince repealed the sanguinary laws of his predecessor, and the disciples had a respite from persecution. Trajan, who succeeded him,[2] and who now occupied the throne, was not unwilling to imitate his policy, so that, in the beginning of his reign, the Christians had no reason to complain of imperial oppression. All accounts concur in stating that their affairs, at this period, presented a most hopeful aspect. They displayed a united front, for they had hitherto been almost entirely free from the evils of sectarianism; and now that they were relieved from the terrible incubus of a ruthless tyranny, their spirits were as buoyant as ever; for though intolerance had thinned their ranks, it had also exhibited their constancy and stimulated their enthusiasm. Their intense attachment to the evangelical cause stood out in strange and impressive contrast with the apathy of polytheism. A heathen repeated, not without scepticism, the tales of his mythology, and readily passed over from one form of superstition to another; but the Christian felt himself strong in the truth, and was prepared to peril all that was

[1] A.D. 96 to A.D. 98.

[2] A.D. 98 to A.D. 117.

dear to him on earth rather than abandon his cherished principles. Well might serious pagans be led to think favorably of a creed which fostered such decision and magnanimity.

The wonderful improvement produced by the Gospel on the lives of multitudes by whom it was embraced, was, however, its most striking and cogent recommendation. The Christian authors who now published works in its defence, to many of which they gave the designation of *apologies*, and who sought, by means of these productions, either to correct the misrepresentations of its enemies, or to check the violence of persecution, always appeal with special confidence to this weighty testimonial. A veteran profligate converted into a sober and exemplary citizen was a witness for the truth whose evidence it was difficult either to discard or to depreciate. Nor were such vouchers rare either in the second or third century. A learned minister of the Church could venture to affirm that Christian communities were to be found composed of men "*reclaimed from ten thousand vices*,"[1] and that these societies, compared with others around them, were "as lights in the world."[2] The practical excellence of the new faith is attested, still more circumstantially, by another of its advocates who wrote about half a century after the age of the apostles. "We," says he, "who formerly delighted in vicious excesses are now temperate and chaste; we, who once practiced magical arts, have consecrated ourselves to the good and unbegotten God; we, who once prized gain above all things, give even what we have to the common use, and share it with such as are in need; we, who once hated and murdered one another, who, on account of difference of customs, would have no common hearth with strangers, now, since the appearance of Christ, live together with them; we pray for our enemies; we seek to persuade those who hate us without cause to live conformably to the goodly precepts of Christ, that they may become partakers with us of the joyful hope of blessings from God, the Lord of all."[3] When we consider that all the old superstitions had

[1] Origen, "Contra Celsum," i. § 67. See also i. § 26.

[2] Origen, "Contra Celsum," iii. § 29.

[3] Justin Martyr, "Apol." ii. 61. Edit., Paris, 1615.

now become nearly effete, we can not be surprised at the signal triumphs of a system which furnished such noble credentials.

Whilst Christianity demonstrated its divine virtue by its good fruits, it invited all men to study its doctrines and to judge for themselves. Those disposed to examine its internal evidences were supplied with facilities for pursuing the investigation, as the Scriptures of the New Testament were publicly read in the assemblies of the faithful, and copies of them were diligently multiplied, so that these divine guides could be readily consulted by every one who really wished for information. The importance of the writings of the apostles and evangelists suggested the propriety of making them available for the instruction of those ignorant of Greek; and versions in the Latin, the Syriac, and other languages,[1] soon made their appearance. Some compositions are stripped of their charms when exhibited in translations, as they owe their attractiveness to the mere embellishments of style or expression; but the Word of God, like all the works of the High and the Holy One, speaks with equal power to every kindred and tongue and people. When correctly rendered into another language, it is still full of grace and truth, of majesty and beauty. In whatever dialect it is clothed, it continues to awaken the conscience and to convert the soul. Its dissemination at this period, either in the original or in translations, contributed greatly to the extension of the Church; and the Gospel, issuing from this pure fountain, revealed its superiority to all the miserable dilutions of superstition and absurdity presented in the systems of heathenism.

When accounting for the rapid diffusion of the new faith in the second and third centuries, many have laid much stress

[1] The Peshito, or old Syriac version, is supposed to have been made in the first half of the second century.—Westcott "On the Canon," pp. 264, 265. There are traces of the existence of a Latin version in the time of Tertullian, or before the close of the second century.—Ibid., p. 275. "Two versions into the dialects of Upper and Lower Egypt—the Thebaic (Sahidic) and Memphitic—date from the close of the third century."—Ibid., pp. 415, 416.

on the miraculous powers of the disciples; but the aid derived from this quarter has been greatly over-estimated. The days of Christ and His apostles were properly the times of "wonders and mighty deeds"; and though the lives of some, on whom extraordinary endowments were conferred, extended far into the second century, it is remarkable that the earliest ecclesiastical writers are almost, if not altogether, silent on the subject of contemporary miracles.[1] Supernatural gifts, perhaps, ceased with those on whom they were bestowed by the inspired founders of the Church;[2] but many imagined that their continuance was necessary to the credit of the Christian cause, and were, therefore, slow to admit that these tokens of the divine recognition had completely disappeared. The prodigies attributed to this period are very indifferently authenticated as compared with those reported by the pen of inspiration.[3] In some cases they are described in ambiguous or general terms, such as the narrators might have been expected to employ when detailing vague and uncertain rumors; and not a few of the cures dignified with the title of miracles are of a commonplace character, such as could have been accomplished without any supernatural interference, and which

[1] See Middleton's "Inquiry," pp. 3, 9.

[2] See Kaye's "Tertullian," pp. 98–101. Edition, Cambridge, 1826. Eusebius represents Irenæus as showing how, "*down to his times*, instances of divine and miraculous power *still existed in some churches*."—*Ecc. Hist.*, v. 7.

[3] Tertullian states that the Emperor Marcus Aurelius became friendly to the Christians, in consequence of a remarkable interposition of Providence in favor of his army, in a war with the Marcomanni and the Quadi. It was alleged that, in answer to the prayers of a body of Christian soldiers, afterward known as the *Thundering Legion*, the imperial troops were relieved by rain, whilst a thunder-storm confounded the enemy. It is quite certain that the Roman army was rescued from imminent peril by a seasonable shower; but it is equally clear that the emperor attributed his deliverance, not to the God of the Christians, but to Jupiter Pluvius, and that a certain section of the Roman soldiers was known long before by the name of the Thundering Legion. There is no evidence that Marcus Aurelius ever became friendly to the Christians. See Lardner, "Heathen Testimonies," "Works," vii. 176–188.

Jewish and heathen quacks frequently performed.[1] No writer of this period asserts that he himself possessed the power either of speaking with tongues,[2] or of healing the sick, or of raising the dead.[3] Legend began to supply food for popular credulity; and it is a suspicious circumstance that the greater number of the miracles which are said to have happened in the second and third centuries are recorded for the first time a hundred years after the alleged date of their occurrence.[4] But Christianity derived no substantial advantage from these fictitious wonders. Some of them were so frivolous as to excite contempt, and others so ridiculous as to afford matter for merriment to the more intelligent pagans.[5]

The Gospel had better claims than any furnished by equivocal miracles; and, though it still encountered opposition, it moved forward in a triumphant career. In some districts it produced such an impression that it threatened the speedy extinction of the established worship. In Bithynia, early in the second century, the temples of the gods were well-nigh deserted, and the sacrificial victims found very few purchasers.[6] The pagan priest took the alarm; the power of the magistrate interposed to prevent the spread of the new doctrine; and spies were found willing to dog the steps and to discover the meeting-places of the converts. Many quailed

[1] See Middleton's "Inquiry," p. 84. Edition, Dublin, 1749. Bishop Kaye has remarked that, in the writings of Tertullian, "the only power of the exercise of which specific instances are alleged, was that of exorcising evil spirits." Kaye's "Tertullian," p. 461. From the symptoms mentioned it would appear that the individuals with whom the exorcists succeeded were epileptics.

[2] Irenæus, who was not unfavorable to the Montanists, speaks of the gift of tongues as possessed by some in his age, and yet he himself, as a missionary, was obliged to struggle with the difficulties of a foreign language. "Adv. Hæres," v., c. 6, and "Præf." ad. 1.

[3] When Theophilus of Antioch, toward the end of the second century, was invited by Autolycus to point out a single person who had been raised from the dead, he did not accept the challenge. See Kaye's "Justin Martyr," p. 217.

[4] Middleton's "Inquiry," Preface, p. iv.

[5] Middleton, pp. 22, 23.

[6] Plinii, "Epist." lib. x. epist. 97.

before the prospect of death, and purchased immunity from persecution by again repairing to the altars of idolatry. But, notwithstanding all the arts of intimidation and chicanery, the good cause continued to prosper. In Rome, in Antioch, in Alexandria, and in other great cities, the truth steadily gained ground; and, toward the end of the second century, it had acquired such strength even in Carthage—a place far removed from the scene of its original proclamation—that, according to the statement of one of its advocates, its adherents amounted to a *tenth* of the inhabitants.[1] About the same period Churches were to be found in various parts of the north of Africa between Egypt and Carthage; and, in the East, Christianity soon acquired a permanent footing in the little State of Edessa,[2] in Arabia, in Parthia, and in India. In the West, it continued to extend itself throughout Greece and Italy, as well as in Spain and France. In the latter country the Churches of Lyons and Vienne attract attention in the second century; and in the third, seven eminent missionaries formed congregations in Paris, Tours, Arles, Narbonne, Toulouse, Limoges, and Clermont.[3] Meanwhile the light of divine truth penetrated into Germany; and, as the third century advanced, even the rude Goths inhabiting Moesia and Thrace were partially brought under its influence. The circumstances which led to the conversion of these barbarians are remarkable. On the occasion of one of their predatory incursions into the Empire, they carried away captive some Christian presbyters; but the parties thus unexpectedly reduced to bondage did not neglect the duties of their spiritual calling, and commended their cause so successfully to those by whom they were enslaved, that the whole nation eventually embraced the Gospel.[4] Even the barriers of the ocean did not arrest the progress of the victorious faith. Before the end of the second century the religion of the cross had reached

[1] Tertullian, "Ad Scapulam," c. 5.

[2] "Spicilegium Syriacum" by Cureton, p. 31. The correspondence between Abgar and our Lord, given by Eusebius, is manifestly spurious.

[3] Gregory of Tours, "Hist. Francorum," lib. i., c. 28.

[4] Sozomen, "Hist. Eccles." ii. 6, and Philostorgius, "Hist. Eccles." ii. 5.

Scotland; for, though Tertullian certainly speaks rhetorically when he says that "the places of Britain inaccessible to the Romans were subject to Christ,"[1] his language at least implies that the message of salvation had already been proclaimed with some measure of encouragement in Caledonia.

Though no contemporary writer has furnished us with anything like an ecclesiastical history of this period, it is very clear, from occasional hints thrown out by the early apologists and controversialists, that the progress of the Church was both extensive and rapid. A Christian author, who flourished about the middle of the second century, asserts that there was then "no race of men, whether of barbarians or of Greeks, or bearing any other name, either because they lived in wagons without fixed habitations, or in tents leading a pastoral life, among whom prayers and thanksgivings were not offered up to the Father and Maker of all things through the name of the crucified Jesus."[2] Another father, who wrote shortly afterward, observes that, "as in the sea there are certain habitable and fertile islands with wholesome springs, provided with roadsteads and harbors, in which those who are overtaken by tempests may find refuge—in like manner has God placed in a world tossed by the billows and storms of sin, congregations or holy churches, in which, as in insular harbors, the doctrines of truth are sheltered, and to which those who desire to be saved, who love the truth, and who wish to escape the judgment of God, may repair."[3] These statements indicate that the Gospel was soon very widely disseminated. Within less than a hundred years after the apostolic age, places of Christian worship were to be seen in the chief cities of the Empire; and early in the third century a decision of the imperial tribunal awarded to the faithful in the great Western metropolis a plot of ground for the erection of one of their religious edifices.[4] At length in A.D. 260 the Emperor Gal-

[1] "Adversus Judæos," c. 7.

[2] Justin Martyr, "Dialogue with Trypho," Opera, p. 345.

[3] Theophilus, "Ad Autolycum," lib. ii. See also Origen, "In Matthæum,' Opera, tom. iii., p. 858.

[4] "Life of Alexander Severus," by Lampridius.

lienus issued an edict of toleration in their favor; and, during the forty years which followed, their numbers so increased that the ecclesiastical buildings in which they had hitherto assembled were no longer sufficient for their accommodation. New and spacious churches now supplanted the old meeting-houses, and these more fashionable structures were soon filled to overflowing.[1] But the spirit of the world began to be largely infused into the Christian communities; the Church was distracted by its ministers struggling with each other for pre-eminence; and even the terrible persecution of Diocletian which succeeded, could neither quench the ambition, nor arrest the violence of contending pastors.

If we stand only for a moment on the beach, we find it impossible to decide whether the tide is ebbing or flowing. But if we remain there for a few hours, the question will not remain unsettled. The sea will meanwhile either retire into its depths, or compel us to retreat before its advancing waters. So it is with the Church. At a given date we may be unable to determine whether it is aggressive, stationary, or retrograde. But when we compare its circumstances at distant intervals, we easily form a judgment. From the first to the fourth century, Christianity moved forward like the flowing tide; and yet its advance, during any one year, was not very perceptible. When, however, we contrast its weakness at the death of the Apostle John with its strength immediately before the commencement of the last imperial persecution, we can not but acknowledge its amazing progress. At the termination of the first century, its adherents were a little flock, thinly scattered over the Empire. In the reign of Diocletian, such was even their numerical importance that no prudent statesman would have thought it safe to overlook them in the business of legislation. They held military appointments of high responsibility; they were to be found in some of the most honorable civil offices; they were admitted to the court of the sovereign; and in not a few cities they constituted a most influential section of the population. The wife of Diocletian,

[1] Euseb. viii. 1.

and his daughter Valeria, are said to have been Christians. The Gospel had now passed over the boundaries of the Empire, and had made conquests among savages, some of whom had, perhaps, scarcely ever heard of the majesty of Rome. But it did not establish its dominion unopposed, and in tracing its annals, we must not neglect to notice the history of its persecutions.

CHAPTER II.

THE PERSECUTIONS OF THE CHURCH.

THE persecutions of the early Church form an important and deeply interesting portion of its history. When its Great Author died on the accursed tree, Christianity was baptized in blood; and for several centuries its annals consist largely of details of proscription and of suffering. God could have introduced the Gospel among men amidst the shouts of applauding nations, but "He doeth all things well"; and He doubtless saw that the way in which its reign was actually inaugurated, was better fitted to exhibit His glory, and to attest its excellence. Multitudes, who might otherwise have trifled with the great salvation, were led to think of it more seriously when they saw that it prompted its professors to encounter such tremendous sacrifices. As the heathen bystanders gazed on the martyrdom of a husband and a master, and as they observed the unflinching fortitude with which he endured his anguish, they often became deeply pensive. They exclaimed, "The man has children, we believe—a wife he has, unquestionably—and yet he is not unnerved by these ties of kindred; he is not turned from his purpose by these claims of affection. We must look into the affair—we must get at the bottom of it. Be it what it may, it can be no trifle which makes one ready to suffer and willing to die for it."[1] The effects produced on spectators by the heroism of the Christians can not have escaped the notice of the heathen magistrates. The Church herself was well aware of the credit she derived from these displays of the constancy of her children; and hence, in

[1] Cyprian, "De Laude Martyrii," Opera, pp. 620, 621. See also Tertullian, "Ad Scapulam," c. 5, *ad finem*.

an address to the persecutors which appeared about the beginning of the third century, the ardent writer boldly invites them to proceed with the work of butchery. "Go on," says he tauntingly, "ye good governors, so much better in the eyes of the people if ye sacrifice the Christians to them—rack, torture, condemn, grind us to powder—our numbers increase in proportion as you mow us down. The blood of Christians is their harvest-seed—that very obstinacy with which you upbraid us, is a teacher. For who is not incited by the contemplation of it to inquire what there is in the core of the matter? and who, that has inquired, does not join us? and who, that joins us, does not long to suffer?"[1]

In another point of view, the perils connected with a profession of the Gospel exercised a wholesome influence. Comparatively few undecided characters joined the communion of the Church; and thus its members, as a body, displayed much consistency and steadfastness. The purity of the Christian morality was never seen to more advantage than in those days of persecution, as every one who joined the hated sect was understood to possess the spirit of a martyr. And never did the graces of the religion of the cross appear in more attractive lustre than when its disciples were groaning under the inflictions of imperial tyranny. As some plants yield their choicest odors only under the influence of pressure, it would seem as if the Gospel reserved its richest supplies of patience, strength, and consolation for times of trouble and alarm. Piety never more decisively asserts its celestial birth than when it stands unblenched under the frown of the persecutor, or calmly awaits the shock of death. In the second and third centuries an unbelieving world often looked on with wonder as the Christians submitted to torment rather than renounce their faith. Nor were spectators more impressed by the *amount* of suffering sustained by the confessors and the martyrs, than by the *spirit* with which they endured their trials. They approached their tortures in no temper of dogged obstinacy or sullen defiance. They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer

[1] Tertullian, "Apol." 50.

in so good a cause. They manifested a self-possession, a meekness of wisdom, a gentleness, and a cheerfulness, at which the multitude were amazed. Nor were these proofs of Christian magnanimity confined to any one class of sufferers. Children and delicate females, illiterate artisans and poor slaves, sometimes evinced as much intrepidity and decision as hoary-headed pastors. The victims of intolerance were upheld by a power which was divine, and of which philosophy could give no explanation.

We form a most inadequate estimate of the trials of the early Christians, if we take into account only those sufferings they endured from the hands of the pagan magistrates. Circumstances which seldom came under the eye of public observation not unfrequently kept them for life in a state of disquietude. Idolatry was so interwoven with the very texture of society that the adoption of the new faith sometimes abruptly deprived an individual of the means of subsistence. If he was a statuary, he could no longer employ himself in carving images of the gods; if a painter, he could no more expend his skill in decorating the high places of superstition. To earn a livelihood, he must either seek out a new sphere for the exercise of his art, or betake himself to some new occupation. The Christian, if a merchant, was, to a great extent, at the mercy of those with whom he transacted business. When his property passed into the hands of dishonest heathens, he was often unable to recover it, as the pagan oaths administered in the courts of justice prevented him from appealing for redress to the laws of the Empire.[1] Were he placed in circumstances which enabled him to surmount this difficulty, he could not afford to exasperate his debtors; as they might have so easily retaliated by accusing him of Christianity. The wealthy disciple durst not accept the office of a magistrate, for he would have thus only betrayed his creed; neither could he venture to aspire to any of the honors of the State, as his promotion must have aggravated the perils of his position. Our Saviour had said, "I am come to set a man at va-

[1] Tertullian, "De Idololatria," c. 17.

riance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household."[1] These words were now verified with such woful accuracy that the distrust pervading the domestic circle often embittered the whole life of the believer. The slave informed against his Christian master; the husband divorced his Christian wife; and children who embraced the Gospel were sometimes disinherited by their enraged parents.[2] As the followers of the cross contemplated the hardships which beset them on every side, well might they have exclaimed in the words of the apostle, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."[3]

In the first century the very helplessness of the Church served partially to protect it from persecution. Its adherents were then almost all in very humble circumstances; and their numbers were not such as to inspire the sovereign with any political anxiety. When they were harassed by the unbelieving Jews, the civil magistrate sometimes interposed, and spread over them the shield of toleration; and though Nero and Domitian were their persecutors, the treatment they experienced from two princes so generally abhorred for cruelty elicited a measure of public sympathy.[4] At length, however, the Roman government, even when administered by sovereigns noted for political virtues, began to assume an attitude of decided opposition; and, for many generations, the disciples were constantly exposed to the hostility of their pagan rulers.

The Romans acted so far upon the principle of toleration as to permit the various nations reduced under their dominion to adhere to whatever religion they had previously professed. They were led to pursue this policy by the combined dictates of expediency and superstition; for they knew that they more easily preserved their conquests by granting indulgence to the vanquished, and they believed that each country had its own

[1] Matt. x. 35, 36.

[2] Tertullian, "Apol." c. 3, and "Ad Nationes," i. § 4. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 19.

[4] The Christians long gloried in the fact that Nero was their first persecutor. See Tertullian, "Apol." c. 5.

tutelary guardians. But they looked with the utmost suspicion on all new systems of religion. Such novelties, they conceived, were connected with designs against the State; and should, therefore, be sternly discountenanced. Hence it was that Christianity so soon met with opposition from the imperial government. For a time it was confounded with Judaism, and, as such, was regarded as entitled to the protection of the laws; but when its true character was ascertained, the disciples were involved in all the penalties attached to the adherents of an unlicensed worship.

Very early in the second century the power of the State was turned against the Gospel. About A.D. 107, the far-famed Ignatius, the pastor of Antioch, suffered martyrdom. Soon afterward our attention is directed to the unhappy condition of the Church by a correspondence between the celebrated Pliny and the Emperor Trajan. In Bithynia, of which Pliny was governor, the new faith was rapidly spreading; and those who derived their subsistence from the maintenance of superstition, had taken the alarm. The proconsul had, therefore, been importuned to commence a persecution; and as existing statutes supplied him with no very definite instructions respecting the method of procedure, he deemed it necessary to seek directions from his imperial master. He stated, at the same time, the course he had hitherto pursued. If individuals arraigned before his judgment-seat, and accused of Christianity, refused to repudiate the obnoxious creed, they were condemned to death; but if they abjured the Gospel, they were permitted to escape unscathed. Trajan approved of this policy, and it now became the law of the Empire.

In his letter to his sovereign[1] Pliny has given a very favorable account of the Christian morality, and has virtually admitted that the new religion was admirably fitted to promote the good of the community. He mentions that the members of the Church were bound by solemn obligations to abstain from theft, robbery, and adultery; to keep their promises, and to avoid every form of wickedness. When such was their ac-

[1] Plinii, "Epist." lib. x., epist. 97.

knowledged character, it may appear extraordinary that a sagacious prince and a magistrate of highly-cultivated mind concurred in thinking that they should be treated with extreme rigor. We have here, however, a striking example of the military spirit of Roman legislation. The laws of the Empire made no proper provision for the rights of conscience; and they were based throughout upon the principle that implicit obedience is the first duty of a subject. Neither Pliny nor Trajan could understand why a Christian did not renounce his creed at the bidding of the civil governor. In their estimation, "inflexible obstinacy" in confessing the Saviour was a crime which deserved no less a penalty than death.

Though the rescript of Trajan awarded capital punishment to the man who persisted in acknowledging himself a Christian, it also required that the disciples were not to be inquisitively sought after. The zeal of many of the enemies of the Church was checked by this provision; as those who attempted to hunt down the faithful expressly violated the spirit of the imperial enactment. But still some Christians suffered the penalty of a good confession. Pliny himself admits that individuals brought before his own tribunal, and who could not be induced to recant, were capitally punished; and elsewhere the law was not permitted to remain in abeyance. About the close of the reign of Trajan, Simeon, the senior minister of Jerusalem, in the hundred and twentieth year of his age, fell a victim to its severity. This martyr was, probably, the second son of Mary, the mother of our Lord, and the same who is enumerated in the Gospels[1] among the brethren of Christ; for the chronology accords with the sup-

[1] Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3. Simon and Simeon are the same. See Acts xv. 7, 14. That the mother of our Lord had other children appears, as well from the texts quoted, as from Matt. i. 25; Mark iii. 31; and Luke ii. 7. In Scripture, brethren sometimes signify cousins, but Jesus is said to have been Mary's "*first-born son*." His brethren are always found in company with His mother, and it is said they "did not believe in him" (John vii. 5), though some of His cousins were among the apostles, Gal. i. 19; Acts i. 13. The superstitious regard for celibacy gave birth to the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary.

position that he was a year younger than our Saviour.[1] His relationship to Jesus, his great age, and his personal excellence secured for him a most influential position in the mother Church of Christendom; and hence, by writers who flourished afterward, and who express themselves in the language of their generation, he is called the second bishop of Jerusalem.

Though the rescript of Trajan served for a time to restrain the violence of persecution, it pronounced the profession of Christianity illegal; so that doubts, which had hitherto existed as to the interpretation of the law, could no longer be entertained. The heathen priests, and others interested in the support of idolatry, did not neglect to proclaim a fact so discouraging to the friends of the Gospel. The law, indeed, still presented difficulties, for an accuser who failed to substantiate his charge was liable to punishment; but the wily adversaries of the Church soon contrived to evade this obstacle. When the people met together on great public occasions, as at the celebration of their games or festivals, and when the interest in the sports began to flag, attempts were often made to provide them with a new and more exciting pastime by raising the cry of "The Christians to the Lions"; and as, at such times, the magistrates had been long accustomed to yield to the wishes of the multitude, many of the faithful were sacrificed to their clamors. Here, no one was obliged to step forward and hold himself responsible for the truth of an indictment; and thus, without incurring any danger, personal malice and blind bigotry had free scope for their indulgence. In the reign of Hadrian, the successor of Trajan, the Christians were sadly harassed by these popular ebullitions; and at length Quadratus and Aristides, two eminent members of the Church at Athens, presented apologies to the Emperor in which they vividly depicted the hardships of their position. Serenius Granianus, the Proconsul of Asia, also complained to

[1] Trajan died A.D. 117, and if Simeon was born a year after Jesus, he entered upon the 120th year of his age about the close of this Emperor's reign. See Greswell's "Dissertations," vol. ii., pp. 127, 128. It was the opinion of Tertullian that Mary had other sons after she gave birth to our Lord. See Neander's "Antignostikus," and Tertullian, "De Monogamia," c. 8.

Hadrian of the proceedings of the mob; and, in consequence, that prince issued a rescript requiring that the magistrates should in future refuse to give way to the extempore clamors of public meetings.

Antoninus Pius, who inherited the throne on the demise of Hadrian, was a mild sovereign; and under him the faithful enjoyed comparative tranquillity; but his successor, Marcus Aurelius, surnamed the Philosopher, pursued a very different policy. Marcus is commonly reputed one of the best of the Roman Emperors; at a very early period of life he gave promise of uncommon excellence; and throughout his reign he distinguished himself as an able and accomplished monarch. But he was proud, pedantic, and self-sufficient; and, like every other individual destitute of spiritual enlightenment, his character presented the most glaring inconsistencies; for he was at once a professed Stoic, and a devout Pagan. This prince could not brook the contempt with which the Christians treated his philosophy; neither was he prepared to permit them to think for themselves. He could conceive how an individual, yielding to the stern law of fate, might meet death with unconcern; but he did not understand how the Christians gloried in tribulation, and hailed even martyrdom with a song of triumph. Had he calmly reflected on the spirit displayed by the witnesses for the truth, he might have seen that they were partakers of a higher wisdom than his own; but the tenacity with which they adhered to their principles, only mortified his self-conceit, and roused his indignation. This philosophic Emperor was the most systematic and heartless of all the persecutors who had ever yet oppressed the Church. When Nero lighted up his gardens with the flames which issued from the bodies of the dying Christians, he wished to transfer to them the odium of the burning of Rome, and he acted only with the caprice and cunning of a tyrant; and when Domitian promulgated his cruel edicts, he was haunted with the dread that the proscribed sect would raise up a rival sovereign; but Marcus Aurelius could not plead even such miserable apologies. He hated the Christians with the cool acerbity of a Stoic; and he took measures for

their extirpation which betrayed at once his folly and his malevolence. Disregarding the law of Trajan, which required that they were not to be officiously sought after, he encouraged spies and informers to harass them with accusations. He caused them to be dragged before the tribunals of the magistrates; and, under pain of death, compelled them to conform to the rites of idolatry. With a refinement of cruelty unknown to his predecessors, he employed torture for the purpose of forcing them to recant. If, in their agony, they gave way, and consented to sacrifice to the gods, they were released; if they remained firm, they were permitted to die in torment. In his reign we read of novel and hideous forms of punishment—evidently instituted for the purpose of aggravating pain and terror. The Christians were stretched on the rack, and their joints were dislocated; their bodies, when lacerated with scourges, were laid on rough sea-shells, or on other most uncomfortable supports; they were torn to pieces by wild beasts, or roasted alive on heated iron chairs. Ingenuity was called to the ignoble office of inventing modes and instruments of torture.

One of the most distinguished sufferers of this reign was Justin, surnamed the Martyr.[1] He was a native of Samaria; but he had travelled into various countries, and had studied various systems of philosophy, with a view to discover the truth. His attention had at length been directed to the Scriptures, and in them he had found that satisfaction which he did not obtain elsewhere. When in Rome, he came into collision with Crescens, a Cynic philosopher, whom he foiled in a theological discussion. His unscrupulous antagonist, annoyed by this discomfiture, turned informer; and Justin, with some others, was put to death. Shortly afterward Polycarp, the aged pastor of Smyrna, was committed to the flames.[2] This venerable man, who had been acquainted in his youth

[1] The account of the trial of himself and his companions, as given in the "Acta Sincera Martyrum," by Ruinart, bears all the marks of truth.

[2] An account of his martyrdom is given in a circular letter of the Church of Smyrna. See Jacobson's "Patres Apostolici," tom. ii., p. 542. Euseb. iv. 15.

with the Apostle John, had long occupied a high position as a prudent, exemplary, and devoted minister. Informations were laid against him, and orders were given for his apprehension. At first he endeavored to elude his pursuers; but when he saw that escape was impossible, he surrendered himself a prisoner. After all, he would have been permitted to remain unharmed had he consented to renounce the Gospel. In the sight of an immense throng who gloated over the prospect of his execution, the good old man remained unmoved. When called on to curse Christ, he returned the memorable answer, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He has done me nothing but good; and how could I curse Him, my Lord and Saviour?" "I will cast you to the wild beasts," said the Proconsul, "if you do not change your mind." "Bring the wild beasts hither," replied Polycarp, "for change my mind from the better to the worse I will not." "Despise you the wild beasts?" exclaimed the magistrate, "I will subdue your spirit by the flames." "The flames which you menace endure but for a time and are soon extinguished," calmly rejoined the prisoner, "but there is a fire reserved for the wicked, whereof you know not; the fire of a judgment to come and of punishment everlasting." These answers put an end to all hope of pardon; a pile of faggots was speedily collected, and Polycarp was burned alive.

Toward the end of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, or about A.D. 177, the Churches of Lyons and Vienne[1] in France endured one of the most horrible persecutions recorded in the annals of Christian martyrdom. A dreadful pestilence, some years before, had desolated the Empire; and the pagans were impressed with the conviction that the new religion had provoked the visitation. The mob in various cities became, in consequence, exasperated; and demanded, with loud cries, the extirpation of the hated sectaries. In the south of France a considerable time elapsed before the ill-will of the multitude broke out into open violence. At first the disciples in Lyons and Vienne were insulted in places of public concourse; then, when

[1] These places are distant from each other about seventeen miles.

pelted with stones, they shut themselves up in their own houses. They were subsequently seized and thrown into prison, and afterward their slaves were put to the torture and compelled to accuse them of crimes of which they were innocent. Pothinus, the pastor of Lyons, upwards of ninety years of age, was brought before the governor and so roughly handled by the populace that he died two days after he was thrown into confinement. The other prisoners were plied with hunger and thirst, and then put to death with wanton and studied cruelty. Two of the sufferers—Blandina, a female, and Ponticus, a lad of fifteen—displayed singular calmness and intrepidity. For several days they were obliged to witness the tortures inflicted on their fellow-disciples, that they might, if possible, be intimidated by the appalling spectacle. After passing through this ordeal the torture was applied to themselves. Ponticus soon sunk under his sufferings, but Blandina still survived. When she had sustained the agony of the heated iron chair, she was put into a net and thrown to a wild bull to be trampled and torn by him, and she continued to breathe long after she had been sadly mangled by the infuriated animal. While subjected to these terrible inflictions she exhibited the utmost patience. No boasts escaped her lips, no murmurs were uttered by her, and even in the paroxysms of her anguish she was full of faith and courage. But such touching exhibitions of the spirit of the Gospel failed to repress the fury of the excited populace. Their hatred of the Gospel was so intense that they resolved to deprive the disciples who survived this reign of terror, of the melancholy satisfaction of paying the last tribute of respect to the remains of their martyred brethren. They accordingly burned the dead bodies and then cast the ashes into the Rhone. "Now," said they, "we shall see whether they will rise again, and whether God can help them and deliver them out of our hands."[1]

Under the brutal and bloody Commodus, the son and heir of Marcus Aurelius, the Christians had some repose. Marcia,

[1] Euseb. v. 1.

his favorite concubine, was a member of the Church,[1] and her influence was successfully exerted in protecting her co-religionists. But the penal statutes were still in force, and they were not everywhere permitted to remain a dead-letter. In this reign[2] we meet with some of the earliest indications of that zeal for martyrdom which was properly the spawn of the fanaticism of the Montanists. In a certain district of Asia a multitude of persons, actuated by this absurd passion, presented themselves in a body before the proconsul Arrius Antoninus and proclaimed themselves Christians. The sight of such a crowd of victims appalled the magistrate; and, after passing judgment on a few, he drove the remainder from his tribunal, exclaiming: "Miserable men, if you wish to kill yourselves, you have ropes or precipices."

The reigns of Pertinax and Julian, the Emperors next in succession after Commodus, amounted together only to a few months, and the faithful had meanwhile to struggle with many discouragements;[3] but these short-lived sovereigns were so much occupied with other matters that they had not time for legislation on the subject of religion. Septimius Severus, who now obtained the imperial dignity, was at first not unfriendly to the Church; and a cure performed on him by Proculus, a Christian slave,[4] has been assigned as the cause of his forbearance; but, as his reign advanced, he assumed an offensive attitude,

[1] Among the Romans a concubine held a certain legal position, and was in fact a wife with inferior privileges. Converted concubines were admitted to the communion of the ancient Church. See Bunsen's "Hippolytus," iii. 7.

[2] Mosheim ("Commentaries" by Vidal, ii. 52, note) and many others refer the transaction recorded in the text to the reign of Hadrian, but without any good cause. Tertullian, who tells the story ("Ad Scapulam," c. 5), evidently alludes to a transaction which had recently occurred. In the reign of Commodus there was a proconsul named Arrius Antoninus who was put to death. See Lamprid., "Vita Commodi," c. 6, 7. See also Kaye's "Tertullian," p. 146, note; and "Neander's General History," by Torrey, i. 162, note.

[3] Clemens Alexandrinus apparently refers to the times immediately following the death of Commodus when he says: "Many martyrs are daily burned, crucified, and decapitated before our eyes." Strom., lib. ii., p. 414.

[4] Tertullian, "Ad Scapulam," c. 4.

and the disciples suffered considerably under his administration. As the Christians were still obliged to meet at night to celebrate their worship, they were accused of committing unnatural crimes in their nocturnal assemblies; and though these heartless calumnies had been triumphantly refuted fifty or sixty years before, they were revived and circulated with fresh industry.[1] About this period Leonides, the father of the learned Origen, was put to death. By a law promulgated in A.D. 202, the Emperor interdicted conversions to Christianity; and, at a time when the Church was making vigorous encroachments on heathenism, this enactment created much embarrassment and anxiety. Some of the governors of provinces, as soon as they ascertained the disposition of the imperial court, commenced forthwith a persecution; and there were magistrates who proceeded to enforce the laws for the base purpose of extorting money from the parties obnoxious to their severity. Sometimes individuals and sometimes whole congregations purchased immunity from suffering by entering into pecuniary contracts with corrupt and avaricious rulers, and, by the payment of a certain sum, obtained certificates[2] which protected them from all further inquisition.[3] The purport of these documents has been the subject of much discussion. According to some they contained a distinct statement to the effect that those named in them had sacrificed to the gods, and had thus satisfied the law; others allege that, though they guaranteed protection, they neither directly stated an untruth nor compromised the religious consistency of their possessors. The more scrupulous and zealous Christians uniformly condemned the use of such certificates. Their owners were known by the suspicious designation of "Libellatici," or "the Certified"; and were considered only less criminal than the "Thurificati," or those who had actually apostatized by offering incense on the altars of paganism.[4]

[1] Compare Justin Martyr, "Apol.," ii., pp. 70, 71, and "Dial. cum Tryphone," p. 227, with Tertullian, "Apol.," c. 7.

[2] Called *libellos*.

[3] These parties sometimes appealed to Acts xvii. 9, in justification of their conduct.

[4] The *sacrificati*, or those who had sacrificed as well as offered incense, were considered still more guilty.

About this time the enforcement of the penal laws in a part of North Africa, probably in Carthage, led to a most impressive display of some of the noblest features of the Christian character. Five catechumens, or candidates for baptism, among whom were Perpetua and Felicitas,[1] had been put under arrest. Perpetua, only two and twenty years of age, was a lady of rank and of singularly prepossessing appearance. Accustomed to all the comforts which wealth can procure, she was ill fitted, with a child at the breast, to sustain the rigors of confinement, especially as she was thrown into a crowded dungeon during the oppressive heat of an African summer. But, with her infant in her arms, she cheerfully submitted to privations, and the thought that she was persecuted for Christ's sake converted her prison into a palace. Her father, a respectable pagan, was overwhelmed with distress because, as he conceived, she brought deep and lasting disgrace upon her family by joining a proscribed sect; and, as she was his favorite child, he employed every expedient which paternal tenderness and anxiety could dictate to lead her to a recantation. When she was conducted to the judgment-seat with the other prisoners, the aged gentleman appeared there, to try the effect of another appeal to her; and the presiding magistrate, touched with pity, entreated her to listen to his arguments, and to change her resolution. But, though deeply moved by the anguish of her parent, all these attempts to shake her constancy were in vain. At the place of execution she sung a psalm of victory, and, before she expired, exhorted her brother and another catechumen, named Rusticus, to continue in the faith, to love each other, and to be neither affrighted nor offended by her sufferings. Her companion, Felicitas, exhibited quite as illustrious a specimen of Christian heroism. When arrested, she was far advanced in pregnancy, and during her imprisonment the pains of labor came upon her. Her cries arrested the attention of the jailer, who said

[1] "Acta Perpetuæ et Felicitatis." The martyrs appear to have been Montanists. See Gieseler, by Cunningham, i. 125, note. Tertullian mentions Perpetua, and his language countenances the supposition that she was a Montanist. "De Anima," c. 55.

to her, "If your present sufferings are so great, what will you do when you are thrown to the wild beasts? You did not consider this when you refused to sacrifice." With undaunted spirit Felicitas replied, "It is *I* that suffer *now*, but *then* there will be Another with me, who will suffer for me, because I shall suffer for His sake." The prisoners were condemned to be torn by wild beasts on the occasion of an approaching festival; and when they had passed through this terrible ordeal, they were dispatched with the sword.

After the death of Septimius Severus, the Christians experienced some abatement of their sufferings. Caracalla and Elagabalus permitted them to remain almost undisturbed; and Alexander Severus has been supposed by some to have been himself a believer. Among the images in his private chapel was a representation of Christ, and he was obviously convinced that Jesus possessed divine endowments; but there is no proof that he ever accepted unreservedly the New Testament revelation. He was simply an eclectic philosopher who held that a portion of truth was to be found in each of the current systems of religion; and who undertook to analyze them and extract the spiritual treasure. The Emperor Maximin was less friendly to the Church; and yet his enmity was confined chiefly to those Christian ministers who had been favorites with his predecessor; so that he can not be said to have promoted any general persecution. Under Gordian the disciples were free from molestation; and his successor, Philip the Arabian, was so well affected to their cause that he has been sometimes, though erroneously, represented as the first Christian Emperor.[1] The death of this monarch in A.D. 249 was, however, soon followed by the fiercest and the most extensive persecution under which the faithful had yet groaned. The more zealous of the pagans, who had been long witnessing with impatience the growth of Christianity, had become convinced that, if the old religion were to be upheld, a mighty effort must very soon be made to strangle its

[1] See the "Chronicon" of Eusebius, par. ii., adnot, p. 197. Edit. Venet. 1818.

rival. Various expedients were meanwhile employed to prejudice the multitude against the Gospel. Every disaster which occurred throughout the Empire was attributed to its evil influence; the defeat of a general, the failure of a harvest, the overflowing of the Tiber, the desolations of a hurricane, and the appearance of a pestilence, were all ascribed to its most inauspicious advancement. The public mind was thus gradually prepared for measures of extreme severity; and Decius, who now became emperor, aimed at the utter extirpation of Christianity. All persons suspected of attachment to the Gospel were summoned before the civil authorities; and if, regardless of intimidation, they refused to sacrifice, attempts were made to overcome their constancy by torture, by imprisonment, and by starvation. When all such expedients failed, the punishment of death was inflicted. Those who fled before the day appointed for their appearance in presence of the magistrates, forfeited their property; and were forbidden, under the penalty of death, to return to the district. The Church in many places had enjoyed peace for thirty years, and meanwhile the tone of Christian principle had been considerably lowered. It was not strange, therefore, that, in these perilous days, many apostatized.[1] The conduct of not a few of the more opulent Christians of Alexandria has been graphically described by a contemporary. "As they were severally called by name, they approached the unholy offering; some, pale and trembling, as if they were going, not to sacrifice, but to be sacrificed to the gods; so that they were jeered by the mob who thronged around them, as it was plain to all that they were equally afraid to sacrifice and to die. Others advanced more briskly, carrying their

[1] The Roman clergy speak of "the remnants and ruined heaps of the fallen lying on all sides." Cyp. "Epist." xxxi., p. 99. Cyprian complains of "*thousands* of letters given *daily*" in behalf of the lapsed by misguided confessors and martyrs. "Epist." xiv., p. 59. The writer here probably speaks somewhat rhetorically, and evidently does not mean, as some have thought, that all these letters were written at Carthage. He speaks of what was done "everywhere," including Italy, as well as the cities of Africa. "Epist." xiv., xxii., xxvi.

effrontery so far as to avow that they never had been Christians."[1] Multitudes now withdrew into deserts or mountains, and there perished with cold and hunger. The prisons were everywhere crowded with Christians; and the magistrates were occupied with the odious task of oppressing and destroying the most meritorious of their fellow-citizens. The disciples were sent to labor in the mines, branded on the forehead, subjected to mutilation, and reduced to the lowest depth of misery. In this persecution the pastors were treated with marked severity, and during its continuance many of them suffered martyrdom. Among the most distinguished victims were Fabian, bishop of Rome; Babylas, bishop of Antioch, and Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem.[2]

The reign of Decius was short;[3] but the hardships of the Church did not cease with its termination, as Gallus adopted the policy of his predecessor. Though Valerian, the successor of Gallus, for a time displayed much moderation, he eventually relinquished this pacific course; and, instigated by his favorite, Macrianus,[4] an Egyptian soothsayer, began, about A.D. 257, to repeat the bloody tragedy which, in the days of Decius, had filled the Empire with such terror and distress. At first the pastors were driven into banishment, and the disciples forbidden to meet for worship. But more stringent measures were soon adopted. An edict appeared announcing that bishops, presbyters, and deacons were to be put to death; that senators and knights, if Christians, were to forfeit their rank and property; that, if they still refused to repudiate their principles, they were to be capitally punished; and that members of the Church in the service of the palace were to be put in chains, and sent to labor on the imperial estates.[5] In this persecution, Sixtus, bishop of Rome, and Cyprian, bishop of Carthage,[6] were martyred.

[1] Dionysius of Alexandria, quoted by Euseb. vi. 41.

[2] Euseb. vi. 39.

[3] A.D. 249 to A.D. 251.

[4] Euseb. vii. 10.

[5] Cyprian, Epist. 82, ad Successum.

[6] Cyprian, who was much respected personally by the high officers of government at Carthage, was, when taken prisoner, granted as great indul-

On the accession of Gallienus, in A.D. 260, the Church was once more restored to peace. Gallienus, though a person of worthless character, was the first Emperor who protected the Christians by a formal edict of toleration. He commanded that they should not only be permitted to profess their religion unmolested, but that they should again be put in possession of their cemeteries[1] and of all other property, either in houses or lands, of which they had been deprived during the reign of his predecessor. This decree was nearly as ample in its provisions as that issued in their favor by the great Constantine upwards of half a century afterward.

But, notwithstanding the advantages secured by this imperial law, the Church still suffered occasionally in particular districts. Hostile magistrates might plead that certain edicts had not been definitely repealed; and, calculating on the connivance of the higher functionaries, could perpetrate acts of cruelty and oppression. The Emperor Aurelian had even resolved to resume the barbarous policy of Decius and Valerian; and, in A.D. 275, had actually prepared a sanguinary edict; but, before it was executed, death stepped in to arrest his violence, and to prevent the persecution. Thus, as has already been intimated, for the last forty years of the third century the Christians enjoyed, almost uninterruptedly, the blessings of toleration. Spacious edifices, frequented by crowds of worshippers, and some of them furnished with sacramental vessels of silver or gold,[2] were to be seen in all the great cities of the Empire. But, in the beginning of the fourth century, the prospect changed. The pagan party beheld with dismay the rapid extension of the Church, and resolved to make a

gence as his circumstances permitted; but Gibbon, who describes his case with special minuteness, most uncandidly represents it as affording an average specimen of the style in which condemned Christians were treated. As an evidence of the social position of the bishop of Carthage we may refer to the testimony of Pontius, his deacon, who states that "numbers of eminent and illustrious persons, men of rank and family and secular distinction, for the sake of their old friendship with him, urged him many times to retire." "Life," § 14.

[1] Euseb. vii. 13.

[2] See Bingham, ii., p. 451.

tremendous effort for its destruction. This faction, pledged to the maintenance of idolatry, caused its influence to be felt in all political transactions; and the treatment of the Christians once more became a question on which statesmen were divided. Diocletian, who was made Emperor in A.D. 285, continued for many years afterward to act on the principle of toleration; but at length he was induced, partly by the suggestions of his own superstitious and jealous temper, and partly by the importunities of his son-in-law, Galerius, to adopt another course. The persecution commenced in the army, where all soldiers refusing to sacrifice forfeited their rank, and were dismissed the service.[1] But other hostile demonstrations soon followed. In the month of February, A.D. 303, the great church of Nicomedia, the city in which the Emperor resided, was broken open; the copies of the Scriptures to be found in it were committed to the flames; and the edifice itself was demolished. The next day an edict appeared interdicting the religious assemblies of the faithful; commanding the destruction of their places of worship; ordering all their sacred books to be burned; requiring those who held offices of honor and emolument to renounce their principles on pain of the forfeiture of their appointments; declaring that disciples in the humbler walks of life, who remained steadfast, were to be divested of their rights as citizens and freemen; and enacting that even slaves, so long as they continued Christians, were incapable of manumission.[2] Some time afterward another edict was promulgated ordaining all ecclesiastics to be seized and put in chains. When the jails were thus filled with Christian ministers, another edict made its appearance, commanding that the prisoners should by all means be compelled to sacrifice. At length a fourth edict, of a still more sweeping character and extending to the whole body of Christians, was published. In accordance with this decree proclamation was made throughout the streets of the cities; and men, women, and children were enjoined to repair

[1] "De Mortibus Persec." c. 10.

[2] Euseb. viii. 2; "De Mort. Persec." c. 13. See also "Neander," by Torrey, i. 202, note.

to the heathen temples. The city gates were guarded that none might escape; and, from lists previously prepared, every individual was summoned by name to present himself, and join in the performance of the rites of paganism.[1] At a subsequent period all provisions sold in the markets, in some parts of the Empire, were sprinkled with the water or the wine employed in idolatrous worship, that the Christians should either be compelled to abstinence, or led to defile themselves by the use of polluted viands.[2]

Throughout almost the whole Church the latter part of the third century was a period of spiritual decay; and many returned to heathenism during the sifting time which now followed. Not a few incurred the reproach of their more consistent and courageous brethren by surrendering the Scriptures in their possession; and those who thus purchased their safety were stigmatized with the odious name of *traditors*. Had the persecutors succeeded in burning all the copies of the Word of God, they would, without the intervention of a miracle, have effectually secured the ruin of the Church; but their efforts to destroy the sacred volume proved abortive; for the faithful seized the earliest opportunity of replacing the consumed manuscripts. The holy book was prized by them more highly than ever, and Bible-burning only gave a stimulus to Bible-transcription. Still, however, sacred literature sustained a loss of no ordinary magnitude in this wholesale destruction of the inspired writings; and there is not at present in existence a single codex of the New Testament of higher antiquity than the Diocletian persecution.[3]

It has been computed that a greater number of Christians perished under Decius than in all the attacks which had previously been made upon them; but their sufferings under Diocletian were still more formidable and disastrous. Pagan-

[1] Eusebius, "Martyrs of Palestine," c. 4.

[2] Eusebius, "Martyrs of Palestine," c. 9.

[3] The Vatican Manuscript, perhaps the oldest in existence, was probably written shortly after this persecution. It possesses internal evidences that its date is anterior to the middle of the fourth century. See Horne, iv. 161, 10th edition.

ism felt that it was now engaged in a death struggle; and this, its last effort to maintain its ascendency, was its most protracted and desperate conflict. It has been frequently stated that the Diocletian persecution was of ten years' duration; and, reckoning from the first indications of hostility to the promulgation of an edict of toleration, it may certainly be thus estimated; but all this time the whole Church was not groaning under the pressure of the infliction. The Christians of the west of Europe suffered comparatively little; as there the Emperor Constantius Chlorus, and afterward his son Constantine, to a great extent, preserved them from molestation. In the East they passed through terrific scenes of suffering; for Galerius and Maximin, the two stern tyrants who governed that part of the Empire on the abdication of Diocletian, endeavored to overcome their steadfastness by all the expedients which despotic cruelty could suggest. A contemporary, who had access to the best sources of information, has given a faithful account of the torments they endured. Vinegar mixed with salt was poured on the lacerated bodies of the dying; some were roasted on huge gridirons; some, suspended aloft by one hand, were then left to perish in excruciating agony; and some, bound to parts of different trees which had been brought together by machinery, were torn limb from limb by the sudden revulsion of the liberated branches.[1] But, even in the East, this attempt to overwhelm Christianity was not prosecuted from its commencement to its close with unabated severity. Sometimes the sufferers obtained a respite; and again, the work of blood was resumed with fresh vigor. Though many were tempted for a season to make a hollow profession of paganism, multitudes met every effort to seduce them in a spirit of indomitable resolution. At length tyranny became weary of its barren office, and the Church obtained peace. In A.D. 311, Galerius, languishing under a loathsome disease, and hoping to be relieved by the God of the Christians, granted them toleration. Maximin subsequently renewed the attacks upon them; but at his death, which occurred in A.D. 313, the edict in favor of the Church, which

[1] Eusebius, viii. 6, 9, 10, 12.

Constantine and his colleague, Licinius, had already published, became law throughout the Empire.

It is often alleged that the Church, before the conversion of Constantine, passed through ten persecutions ;[1] but the statement gives a very incorrect idea of its actual suffering. It is more accurate to say that for between two and three hundred years the faithful were under the ban of imperial proscription. During all this period they were liable to be pounced upon at any moment by bigoted, domineering, or greedy magistrates. There were not, indeed, ten persecutions conducted with the systematic and sanguinary violence exhibited in the times of Diocletian or of Decius ; but there were perhaps provinces of the Empire where almost every year for upwards of two centuries some Christians suffered for the faith.[2] The friends of the confessors and the martyrs were not slow to acknowledge the hand of Providence, as they traced the history of the Emperors by whom the Church was favored or oppressed. It was remarked that the disciples were not worn out by the barbarities of a continuous line of persecutors ; for an unscrupulous tyrant was often succeeded on the throne by an equitable or an indulgent sovereign. Thus the Christians had every now and then a breathing-time during which their hopes were revived and their numbers recruited. It was observed, too, that the princes, of whose cruelty they had reason to complain, generally ended their career under very distressing circumstances. An ecclesiastical writer who flourished toward the commencement of the fourth century has discussed this subject in a special treatise, in which he has left behind him a very striking account of "The Deaths of the Persecutors."[3] Their history certainly furnishes a most significant commentary on the divine announcement that "the Lord is known by

[1] This idea is as ancient as the days of Augustine. See his "City of God," xviii. 52.

[2] Firmilian refers to a noted persecution, which "did not extend to the whole world, *but was local.*" Cyprian, "Epist." lxxv. p. 305.

[3] The treatise "De Mortibus Persecutorum" is generally attributed to Lactantius, who flourished in the early part of the fourth century. The authorship is doubtful.

the judgment which he executeth."[1] Nero, the first hostile Emperor, perished ignominiously by his own hand. Domitian, the next persecutor, was assassinated. Marcus Aurelius died a natural death; but, during his reign, the Empire suffered dreadfully from pestilence and famine; and war raged almost incessantly from its commencement to its close. The people of Lyons, who signalized themselves by their cruelty to the Christians, did not escape a righteous retribution; for about twenty years after the martyrdom of Pothinus and his brethren, the city was pillaged and burned.[2] Septimius Severus narrowly escaped murder by the hand of one of his own children. Decius, whose name is associated with an age of martyrdom, perished in the Gothic war. Valerian, another oppressor, ended his days in Persia in degrading captivity. The Emperor Aurelian was assassinated. Diocletian languished for years the victim of various maladies, and is said to have abruptly terminated his life by suicide. Galerius, his son-in-law, died of a most horrible distemper; and Maximin took away his own life by poison.[3] The interpretation of providences is not to be rashly undertaken; but the record of the fate of persecutors forms a most extraordinary chapter in the history of man; and the melancholy circumstances under which so many of the enemies of religion have finished their career, have sometimes impressed those who have been otherwise slow to acknowledge the finger of the Almighty.

The persecutions of the early Church originated partly in selfishness and superstition. Idolatry afforded employment to tens of thousands of artists and artisans, all of whom had thus a direct pecuniary interest in its conservation; and the ignorant rabble, taught to associate Christianity with misfortune, were prompted to clamor for its overthrow. Mistaken policy had also some share in the sufferings of the Christians; for statesmen, fearing that the disciples in their secret meetings were hatching

[1] Ps. ix. 16.

[2] Herodian, iii. 23. This circumstance, as well as some others here stated, is not mentioned in the work "De Mort. Persec." Tertullian mentions some other remarkable facts, "Ad Scapulam," c. 3.

[3] "De Mortib. Persec." c. 49.

treason, viewed them with suspicion and treated them with severity. But another element of at least equal strength contributed to promote persecution. The pure and spiritual religion of the New Testament was distasteful to the human heart, and its denunciations of wickedness in every form stirred up the malignity of the licentious and unprincipled. The faithful complained that they suffered for neglecting the worship of the gods, when philosophers, who derided the services of the established ritual, escaped with impunity.[1] But the sophists were not likely ever to wage an effective warfare against immorality and superstition. Many of themselves were persons of worthless character, and their speculations were of no practical value. It was otherwise with the Gospel. Its advocates were in earnest; and it was quickly perceived that, if permitted to make way, it would revolutionize society. Hence the bitter opposition which it so soon awakened.

The sore oppression which the Church endured for so many generations might have indelibly imprinted on the hearts of her children the doctrine of liberty of conscience. As the early Christians expostulated with their pagan rulers, they often described most eloquently the folly of persecution. "How unjust is it," said they, "that freemen should be driven to sacrifice to the gods, when in all other instances a willing mind is required as an indispensable qualification for any office of religion."[2] "It appertains to man's proper right and natural privilege that each should worship that which he thinks to be God. . . . . Neither is it the part of religion to compel men to religion, which ought to be adopted voluntarily, not of compulsion, seeing that sacrifices are required of a willing mind. Thus, even if you compel us to sacrifice, you render no sacrifice thereby to your gods, for they desire not sacrifices from unwilling givers, unless they are contentious; but God is not contentious."[3] When, however, the Church obtained possession of the throne of the Empire, she soon ig-

[1] Tertullian, "Apol." c. 46.

[2] Tertullian, "Apol." 28.

[3] Tertullian, "Ad Scapulam," § 2. See also "Lactantius, Instit." v. 20.

nored these lessons of toleration ; and, snatching the weapons of her tormentors, she attempted, in her turn, to subjugate the soul by the dungeon, the sword, and the faggot. For at least thirteen centuries after the establishment of Christianity by Constantine, it was taken for granted almost everywhere that those branded with the odious name of heretics were unworthy the protection of the laws ; and that, though good and loyal citizens, they ought to be punished by the civil magistrate. This doctrine, so alien to the spirit of the New Testament, has often spread desolation and terror throughout whole provinces ; and has led to the deliberate murder of a hundredfold more Christians than were destroyed by pagan Rome. Even the fathers of the Reformation did not escape the influence of an intolerant training ; but that Bible which they brought forth from obscurity has been gradually imparting a milder tone to earthly legislation ; and various providences have been illustrating the true meaning of the proposition that Christ's kingdom is "not of this world."[1] In all free countries it is now admitted that the weapons of the Church are not carnal, and that the jurisdiction of the magistrate is not spiritual. "God alone is Lord of the conscience"; and it is only by the illumination of His Word that the monitor within can be led to recognize His will and submit to His authority.

[1] John xviii. 36.

CHAPTER III.

FALSE BRETHREN AND FALSE PRINCIPLES IN THE CHURCH. SPIRIT AND CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIANS.

SOME have an idea that the saintship of the early Christians was of a type altogether unique and transcendental. In primitive times the Spirit was poured out in rich effusion, and the subjects of His grace, when contrasted with the heathen around them, often exhibited most attractively the beauty of holiness; but the same Spirit still dwells in the hearts of the faithful, and He is as able, as He ever was, to enlighten and to save. As man, wherever he exists, possesses substantially the same organic conformation, so the true children of God, to whatever generation they belong, have the same divine lineaments. The age of miracles has passed away, but the reign of grace continues; and, at the present day, there are among the members of the Church as noble examples of vital godliness as in the first or second century.

There was a traitor among the Twelve, and in the Apostolic Church there were not a few unworthy members. "*Many* walk," says Paul, "of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."[1] In the second and third centuries the number of such false brethren did not diminish. To those ignorant of its saving power, Christianity commends itself, by its external evidences, as a revelation from God; and many, who are not prepared to submit to its authority, seek admission to its privileges. The superficial character of much of the evangelism current ap-

[1] Phil. iii. 18, 19.

peared in times of persecution; for, on the first appearance of danger, multitudes abjured the Gospel and returned to the heathen superstitions. In the third century, the more zealous champions of the faith denounced the secularity of many of the ministers of the Church. Before the Decian persecution, not a few of the bishops were mere worldlings; and such was their zeal for money-making, that they left their parishes neglected, and travelled to remote districts, where, at certain seasons of the year, they carried on a profitable traffic.[1] According to the testimony of the most distinguished ecclesiastics of the period, crimes were then perpetrated to which it would be difficult to find anything like parallels in the darkest pages of the history of modern Christianity. The chief pastor of the largest Church in the Proconsular Africa tells, for instance, of one of his own presbyters who robbed orphans and defrauded widows, who permitted his father to die of hunger and treated his pregnant wife with horrid brutality.[2] Another ecclesiastic, of still higher position, speaks of three bishops in his neighborhood who engaged, when intoxicated, in the solemn rite of ordination.[3] Such excesses were indignantly condemned by all right-hearted disciples, but the fact, that those to whom they were imputed were not destitute of partisans, supplies clear yet melancholy proof that neither the Christian people nor the Christian ministry, even in the third century, possessed an unsullied reputation.

The introduction of a false standard of piety created much mischief. It had long been received as a maxim, among certain classes of philosophers, that bodily abstinence is necessary to those who attain more exalted wisdom; and the Gentile theology, especially in Egypt and the East, had endorsed the principle. It was not without advocates among the Jews, as is apparent from the discipline of the Essenes and the Therapeutæ. At an early period its influence was felt within the pale of the Church, and before the termination of the second

[1] Cyprian, "De Lapsis," p. 374.

[2] Cyprian, "Ad Cornelium," epist. xlix., p. 143. Cyprian also charges one of his deacons with fraud, extortion, and adultery. Epist. xxxviii., p. 116.

[3] Cornelius of Rome in Euseb. vi. 43.

century, individual members here and there eschewed certain kinds of food and abstained from marriage.[1] The pagan literati, who now joined the disciples in considerable numbers, did much to promote the credit of this adulterated Christianity. Its votaries, designated *ascestics* and *philosophers*,[2] did not withdraw themselves from the world; but, whilst adhering to their own regimen, still remained mindful of their social obligations. Their self-imposed mortification soon found admirers, and an opinion gradually gained ground that these abstinent disciples cultivated a higher form of piety. The adherents of the new discipline silently increased, and by the middle of the third century, a class of females who led a single life, and who, by way of distinction, were called *virgins*, were in some places regarded by the other Church members with special veneration.[3] Among the clergy also celibacy was considered a mark of superior holiness.[4] But, in various places, pietism at this time assumed a form which disgusted all persons of sober judgment and ordinary discretion. The unmarried clergy and the virgins cultivated the communion of saints after a new fashion, alleging that, in each other's society, they enjoyed peculiar advantages for spiritual improvement. It was not uncommon to find a single ecclesiastic and one of the sisterhood of virgins dwelling in the same house and sharing the same bed![5] All the while the parties repudiated the imputation of any improper intercourse, but in some cases the proofs of guilt were too plain to be concealed, and common sense refused to credit the

[1] See Eusebius, v. 3, vi. 9.

[2] See Neander's "Antignostikus," part ii., sect. ii., at the end. The Christian ascetics adopted the dress of the pagan philosophers.

[3] Cyprian, "De Habitu Virginum," pp. 354, 361.

[4] Still, in the time of Origen, the sons of bishops, presbyters, and deacons valued themselves on their parentage.—Origen in "Matthæum," xv. opera, tom. iii., p. 690. Even Cyprian bears honorable testimony to certain married presbyters. See "Epist." xxxv., p. 111. See also "Epist." xviii. p. 67. Cyprian himself was indebted for his conversion to an eminent presbyter, named Cæcilius, who had a wife and children. "Life of Cyprian," by Pontius the Deacon, § 5. See also Euseb. vi. 42.

[5] Cyprian, "Epist." lxii., p. 219. Concerning the *Subintroductæ*, see also the letter relating to Paul of Samosata in Euseb. vii. 30.

pretensions of such an absurd and suspicious spiritualism. The ecclesiastical authorities felt it necessary to interfere, and compel the professed virgins and the single clergy to abstain from a degree of intimacy which was unquestionably not free from the appearance of evil.

At the time that the advocates of "whatsoever things are of good report" were protesting against the improprieties of these spiritual brethren and sisters, Paul and Antony, the fathers and founders of Monachism, commenced to live as hermits. Paul was a native of Egypt, and the heir of a considerable fortune; but, driven at first by persecution from the abodes of men, he ultimately adopted the desert as the place of his residence. Antony, in another part of the same country, guided by a mistaken spirit of self-renunciation, divested himself of all his property, and also retired into a wilderness. The biographies of the two well-meaning but weak-minded visionaries, written by two of the most eminent divines of the fourth century,[1] are very humiliating memorials of folly and fanaticism. These solitaries spent each a long life in a cave, macerating the body with fasting, and occupying the mind with the reveries of a morbid imagination. In an age of growing superstition their dreamy pietism was mistaken by many for sanctity of uncommon excellence; and the admiration bestowed on them, tempted others, in the beginning of the following century, to imitate their example. Soon afterward, societies of these sons of the desert were established; and, in the course of a few years, a taste for the monastic life spread, like wild-fire, over the whole Church.

It is a curious fact that the figure of the instrument of torture on which our Lord was put to death, occupied a prominent place among the symbols of the ancient heathen worship. From the most remote antiquity the cross was venerated in Egypt and Syria; it was held in equal honor by the Buddhists of the East;[2] and, what is still more extraordinary, when the

[1] Jerome and Athanasius.

[2] See Medhurst's "China," p. 217. The symbol of the cross was engraved on the walls of the temple of Serapis. "When the temple of Serapis was torn down and laid bare," says Socrates, "there were found in it, engraven

Spaniards first visited America, the well-known sign was found among the objects of worship in the idol temples of Anahuac.[1] About the commencement of our era, the pagans were wont to make the sign of a cross on the forehead in the celebration of some of their sacred mysteries.[2] A satisfactory explanation of the origin of such peculiarities in the ritual of idolatry can scarcely be expected; but it certainly need not excite surprise if the early Christians were impressed by them, and if they viewed them as so many unintentional testimonies to the truth of their religion. The disciples displayed, indeed, no little ingenuity in their attempts to discover the figure of a cross in almost every object around them. They recognized it in the trees and the flowers, in the fishes and the fowls, in the sails of a ship and the structure of the human body;[3] and

on stones, certain characters, which they call hieroglyphics, having the forms of crosses. *Both the Christians and Pagans on seeing them, thought they had reference to their respective religions.*" "Ecc. Hist." v. 17.

[1] Prescott, "Conquest of Mexico," iii. 338–340. See also note, p. 340. Sir Robert Ker Porter mentions a block of stone found among the ruins of Susa, having, on one side, inscriptions in the cuneiform character; and, on another, hieroglyphical figures with a cross in the corner. See his "Travels," vol. ii., p. 415. Among the ancient pagans, the cross was the symbol of eternal life, or divinity. On medals and monuments of a date far anterior to Christianity, it is found in the hands of statues of victory and of figures of monarchs. See also Tertullian, "Apol." c. 16.

[2] Tertullian, "De Præscrip. Hæret." c. 40. See also Kaye's Tertullian, p. 441. "The ancient world was possessed by a dread of demons, and under an anxious apprehension of the influence of charms, sought for external preservatives against the powers of evil, and accompanied their prayers with external signs and gestures." Bunsen's "Hippolytus," iii. 351.

[3] See Justin Martyr, "Dialogue with Trypho," pp. 259, 318, and "Apol." ii., p. 90. Tertullian, "Adv. Judæos," c. 10. In the "Octavius" of Minucius Felix the following remarkable passage occurs: "What are your military ensigns, and banners, and standards, but crosses gilded and ornamented? *Your trophies of victory not only imitate the appearance of a cross, but also of a man fixed to it.* We discern the sign of a cross in the very form of a ship, whether it is wafted along with swelling sails, or glides with its oars extended. When a military yoke is erected there is a sign of a cross, and, in like manner, when one with hands stretched forth devoutly addresses his God. *Thus, there seems to be some reason in nature for it, and some reference to it in your own system of religion.*" The monogram

if they borrowed from their heathen neighbors the custom of making a cross on the forehead, they were of course ready to maintain that they thus only redeemed the holy sign from profanation. Some of them were perhaps prepared, on prudential grounds, to plead for its introduction. Heathenism was a religion of bowings and genuflections; its votaries were, ever and anon, attending to some little rite or form; and, because of the multitude of these diminutive acts of outward devotion, its ceremonial was at once frivolous and burdensome. When the pagan passed into the Church, he often felt, for a time, the awkwardness of the change; and was frequently on the point of repeating, automatically, the gestures of his old superstition. It was, therefore, deemed expedient to supersede more objectional forms by something of a Christian complexion; and the use of the sign of the cross presented itself as an observance equally familiar and convenient.[1] But the disciples would have acted more wisely had they boldly discarded all the puerilities of paganism; for credulity soon began to ascribe supernatural virtue to this vestige of the repudiated worship. As early as the beginning of the third century, it was believed to operate like a charm; and it was accordingly employed on almost all occasions by many of the Christians. "In all our travels and movements," says a writer of this period, "as often as we come in or go out, when we put on our clothes or our shoes, when we enter the bath or sit down at table, when we light our candles, when we go to bed, or recline upon a couch, or whatever may be our employment, we mark our forehead with the sign of the cross."[2]

☧, composed of the initial Greek capitals X and P of the name χριστος, was in use among the heathen long before our era. It is to be found on coins of the Ptolemies. Aringhi, "Roma Subterranea," ii., p. 567.

[1] Tertullian maintains ("Ad Jud." c. xi.) that the *mark* mentioned Ezek. ix. 4 was the letter T, or the sign of the cross. See a Dissertation on this subject by Vitringa, "Observationes Sacræ," lib. ii., c. 15. See also Origen, "In Ezechielem," Opera, tom. iii., p. 424, and Cyprian to Demetrianus, § 12. It would appear that the worshippers of Apollo used to mark themselves on the forehead with the letters XH. See Kitto's "Cyclopædia of Bib. Lit." art. FOREHEAD.

[2] Tertullian, "De Corona," c. 3. By the Romans, crosses were erected in conspicuous places to intimidate offenders, just in the same way as the

But whilst not a few of the Christians were beginning to adopt some of the trivial rites of paganism, they continued firmly to protest against its more flagrant corruptions. They assailed its gross idolatry with bold and biting sarcasms. "Stone, or wood, or silver," said they, "becomes a god when man chooses that it should, and dedicates it to that end. With how much more truth do dumb animals, such as mice, swallows, and kites, judge of your gods? They know that your gods feel nothing; they gnaw them, they trample and sit on them; and if you did not drive them away, they would make their nests in the very mouth of your deity."[1] The Church of the first three centuries rejected the use of images in worship, and no pictorial representations of the Saviour were to be found even in the dwellings of the Christians. They conceived that such visible memorials convey no idea whatever of the ineffable glory of the Son of God; and they held that it is the duty of His servants to foster a spirit of devotion, not by the contemplation of His material form, but by meditating on His holy and divine attributes as they are exhibited in creation, providence, and redemption. So anxious were they to avoid even the appearance of anything like image-worship, that when they wished to mark articles of dress or furniture with an index of their religious profession, they employed the likeness of an anchor, or a dove, or a lamb, or a cross, or some other object of an emblematical character.[2] "We must not," said they, "cling to the sensuous, but rise to the spiritual. The familiarity of daily sight lowers the dignity of the divine, and to pretend to worship a spiritual essence through earthly matter, is to degrade that essence to

drop is now exhibited in the front of a jail. It is not improbable that some of these crosses were afterward worshipped by the Christians! Aringhi mentions a stone, to be seen in his own time in the Vatican, which was treated with the same absurd reverence. On this stone many of the early Christians were said to have suffered martyrdom, probably by decapitation; but it was afterward held "in very great honor" at Rome, and regarded as "a sacred thing!" "Roma Subterranea," i. 219.

[1] Minucius Felix, "Octavius," c. 24. There is a similar passage in Tertullian, "Apol." c. 12.

[2] Clemens Alexandrinus, "Pædagog." iii., Opera, pp. 246, 247.

the world of sense."[1] Even so late as the beginning of the fourth century the practice of displaying paintings in places of worship was prohibited by ecclesiastical authority. A canon which bears on this subject, and which was enacted by the Council of Elvira, held about A.D. 305, is more creditable to the pious zeal than to the literary ability of the assembled fathers. "We must not," said they, "have pictures in the church, lest that which is worshipped and adored be painted on the walls."[2]

It has been objected to the Great Reformation of the sixteenth century that it exercised a prejudicial influence on the arts of painting and statuary. The same argument was urged against the Gospel itself in the days of its original promulgation. Whilst the early Church entirely discarded the use of images in worship, its more zealous members looked with suspicion upon all who assisted in the fabrication of these objects of the heathen idolatry.[3] The excuse that the artists were laboring for subsistence, and that they had themselves no idea of bowing down to the works of their own hands, did not satisfy the scruples of their more conscientious brethren. "Assuredly," they exclaimed, "you are a worshipper of idols when you help to promote their worship. It is true you bring to them no outward victim, but you sacrifice to them your mind. Your sweat is their drink-offering. You kindle for them the light of your skill."[4]

By denouncing image-worship, the early Church to some extent interfered with the profits of the painter and the sculptor; but, in another way, it did much to purify and ele-

[1] Clemens Alexandrinus, "Stromat." v., Opera, p. 559.

[2] Canon 36. The comment of the Roman Catholic Dupin upon this canon is worthy of note. "To me," says he, "it seems better to understand it in the plainest sense, and to confess that the Fathers of this Council did not approve the use of images, no more than that of wax candles lighted in full daylight."—*History of Ecclesiastical Writers, Fourth Century.*

[3] Tertullian, "De Pudicitia," c. 7. But all were not so scrupulous, for Tertullian elsewhere complains that the image-makers were chosen to church offices. "De Idololatria," c. 7.

[4] Tertullian, "De Idololatria," c. 6.

vate the taste of the public. In the second and third centuries the playhouse in every large town was a centre of attraction; and whilst the actors were generally persons of very loose morals, their dramatic performances were perpetually pandering to the depraved appetites of the age. It is not, therefore, wonderful that all true Christians viewed the theatre with disgust. Its frivolity was offensive to their grave temperament; they recoiled from its obscenity; and its constant appeals to the gods and goddesses of heathenism outraged their religious convictions.[1] In their estimation, the talent devoted to its maintenance was miserably prostituted; and whilst every actor was deemed unworthy of ecclesiastical fellowship, every church member was prohibited, by attendance or otherwise, from giving any encouragement to the stage. The early Christians were also forbidden to frequent the public shows, as they were considered scenes of temptation and pollution. Every one at his baptism was required to renounce "the devil, his pomp, and his angels,"[2]—a declaration which implied that he was henceforth to absent himself from the heathen spectacles. At this time, statesmen, poets, and philosophers were not ashamed to appear among the crowds who assembled to witness the combats of the gladiators, though, on such occasions, human life was recklessly sacrificed. But here the Church, composed chiefly of the poor of this world, was continually giving lessons in humanity to heathen legislators and literati. It protested against cruelty, as well to the brute creation as to man; and condemned the taste which derived gratification from the shedding of the blood either of lions or of gladiators. All who sanctioned by their presence the sanguinary sports of the amphitheatre, incurred a sentence of excommunication.[3]

Though an increasing taste for inactivity and solitude be-

[1] Cyprian, "Ad Donatum," Opera, p. 5.

[2] Tertullian, "De Spectaculis," c. 4. According to the English Liturgy the person baptized "renounces the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world." This was originally intended to apply to such exhibitions as those mentioned in the text.

[3] Tertullian, "De Pudicitia," c. 7. Theophilus to Autolycus, book iii.

tokened the growth of a bastard Christianity, and though various other circumstances were indicative of tendencies to adulterate religion, either by reducing it to a system of formalism, or by sublimating it into a life of empty contemplation, there were still proofs of the existence of a large amount of healthy and vigorous piety. The members of the Church, as a body, were distinguished by their exemplary morals; and about the beginning of the third century, one of their advocates, when pleading for their toleration, could venture to assert that, among the numberless culprits brought under the notice of the magistrates, none were Christians.[1] Wherever the Gospel spread, its social influence was most salutary. Its first teachers applied themselves discreetly to the redress of prevalent abuses; and time gradually demonstrated the effectiveness of their plans of reformation. When they appeared, polygamy was common;[2] and had they assailed it in terms of unmeasured severity, they might have defeated their own object by rousing up a most formidable and exasperated opposition. It would have been argued by the Jews that they were reflecting on the patriarchs; and it would have been said by the Roman governors that they were interfering with matters which belonged to the province of the civil magistrate. They were obliged, therefore, to proceed with extreme caution. In the first place, they laid it down as a principle that every bishop and deacon must be "the husband of one wife,"[3] or, in other words, that no polygamist could hold office in their society. They thus, in the most pointed way, inculcated sound views respecting the institution of marriage; for they intimated that whoever was the husband of more than one wife was not, in every respect, "a pattern of good works," and was consequently unfit for ecclesiastical promotion. In the

[1] Tertullian, "Apol." c. 44. Minucius Felix, in his "Octavius," makes a similar statement: "The prisons are crowded with criminals of your religion, but no Christian is there, unless he is either accused on account of his faith, or is a deserter from his faith."

[2] Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, says to him, "Your blind and foolish teachers even to this day permit every one of you to have *four or five wives*."—*Opera*, p. 363.

[3] 1 Tim iii. 2, 12.

second place, in all their discourses they proceeded on the assumption that the union of one man and one woman is the divine arrangement.[1] Throughout the whole of the New Testament, wherever marriage is mentioned, no other idea is entertained. It is easy to anticipate the effect of this method of procedure. It soon came to be understood that no good Christian had at one time more than one wife; and at length the polygamist was excluded from communion by a positive enactment.[2]

Every disciple who married a heathen was cut off from Church privileges. The apostles had condemned such an alliance,[3] and it still continued to be spoken of in terms of the strongest reprobation. Nothing, it was said, but discomfort and danger could be anticipated from the union; as parties related so closely, and yet differing so widely on the all-important subject of religion, could not permanently hold cordial intercourse. A writer of this period has given a vivid description of the trials of the female who made such an ill-assorted match. When she is about to be engaged in spiritual exercises, her husband will contrive some scheme for her annoyance; as her zeal will awaken his jealousy, and provoke his opposition. "If there be a prayer-meeting, the husband will devote this day to the use of the bath; if a fast is to be observed, the husband has a feast at which he entertains his friends; if a religious ceremony is to be attended, never does household business fall more upon her hands. And who would allow his wife, for the sake of visiting the brethren, to go from street to street the round of strange and especially of the poorer class of cottages? . . . . If a stranger brother come to her, what lodging in an alien's house? If a present is to be made to any, the barn, the storehouse, are closed against her."[4]

The primitive heralds of the Gospel acted with remarkable

[1] Rom. vii. 1–3; 1 Cor. vii. 2.

[2] The Montanists, in their extravagance, insisted that any one who contracted a second marriage after the death of his first wife should be excommunicated.

[3] 2 Cor. vi. 14.

[4] Tertullian, "Ad Uxorem," ii. 4.

prudence in reference to the question of slavery. According to some high authorities, bondsmen constituted one-half[1] of the entire population of the Roman Empire; and as the new religion was designed to promote the spiritual good of man, rather than the improvement of his civil or political condition, the apostles did not deem it expedient, in the first instance, to attempt to break up established relations. They did not refuse to receive any one as a member of the Church because he was a slave-owner; neither did they reject any applicant for admission because he was a slave. The social position of the individual did not at all affect his ecclesiastical standing; for bond and free are "all one in Christ Jesus."[2] In the Church the master and the servant were on a footing of equality; they joined in the same prayers; they sat down, side by side, at the same communion-table; and they saluted each other with the kiss of Christian recognition. A slave-owner might belong to a congregation of which his slave was the teacher; and thus, whilst in the household, the servant was bound to obey his master according to the flesh, in the Church the master was required to remember that his minister was "worthy of double honor."[3]

The spirit of the Gospel is pre-eminently a spirit of freedom; but the inspired founders of our religion did not fail to remember that we may be partakers of the glorious liberty of the children of God, when we are under the yoke of temporal bondage. Whilst, therefore, they did not hesitate to speak of emancipation as a blessing, and whilst they said to the slave, "If thou mayest be made free, use it rather";[4] they at the same time declared it to be his duty to submit cheerfully to the restraints of his present condition. "Let every man," said

[1] Gibbon, "Decline and Fall," chap. ii. Some writers, such as Zumpt and Merivale, consider this estimate quite extravagant. Others again think it quite too low. See Schaff's "History of the Christian Church," p. 316, New York, 1859; and Hallam's "Middle Ages," i. 145, Edit. 1841.

[2] Gal. iii. 28.

[3] Onesimus, the slave mentioned Philem. 10, 16, became a Christian minister.

[4] 1 Cor. vii. 21.

they, "abide in the same calling wherein he was called; for he that is called in the Lord, being a bond-servant, is the Lord's freeman."[1] They were most careful to teach converted slaves not to presume on their church membership; and not to be less respectful and obedient when those to whom they were in bondage were their brethren in the Lord. "Let as many servants as are under the yoke," says the apostle, "count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren, but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit."[2]

The influence of Christianity on the condition of the slave was soon felt. The believing master was more humane than his pagan neighbor;[3] his bearing was more gentle, conciliatory, and considerate; and the domestics under his care were more comfortable.[4] There was a disposition among slave-owners to let the oppressed go free; and when they performed such an act of mercy, and both parties were in communion with the Church, the congregation was assembled to witness the consummation of the happy deliverance.[5] Thus, multitudes of bondsmen in all parts of the Roman Empire were soon taught to regard the Gospel as their best benefactor.

Whilst Christianity, in the spirit of its Great Founder, was laboring to improve the tone of public sentiment, and to undo heavy burdens, it exhibited other most attractive characteristics. Wherever a disciple travelled, if a church existed in the district, he felt himself at home. The ecclesiastical certificate which he carried along with him, at once introduced him to the meetings of his co-religionists, and secured for him all the

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 20–22. [2] 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.

[3] Kindness to slaves was particularly enjoined by the early Church teachers. See Cyprian, "Lib. Tres. Test. adv. Judæos," lib. iii., §§ 72, 73.

[4] It is stated in the "Octavius" of Minucius Felix that, in the estimation of the heathen, "for a slave to be partaker in certain religious ceremonies is deemed abominable impiety" (c. 25).

[5] One of the laws made by Constantine shortly after his conversion sanctioned the manumission of slaves on the Lord's day.

advantage of membership.[1] The heathen were astonished at the cordiality with which the believers among whom they resided greeted a Christian stranger. He was saluted with the kiss of peace; ushered into their assembly; and invited to share the hospitality of the domestic board. If he was sick, they visited him; if he was in want, they made provision for his necessities. The poor widows were supported at the expense of the Church; and for any of the brethren carried captive by predatory bands of the barbarians who hovered upon the borders of the Empire, contributions were made to purchase their liberation.[2] To those without the Church, its members appeared as one large and affectionate family. The pagan could not comprehend what it was that so closely cemented their brotherhood; for he did not understand how they could be attracted to each other by love to a common Saviour. He was induced to believe that they held intercourse by certain mysterious signs, and that they were affiliated by something like the bond of freemasonry. Even statesmen observed with uneasiness the spirit of fraternity which reigned among the Christians; and, though the disciples never were convicted of any political designs, suspicions were often entertained that, after all, they formed a secret association, on an extensive scale, which would one day prove dangerous to the established government.

But Christianity, like the sun, shines on the evil and the good; and opportunities occurred for showing that its charities were not confined within the limits of its own denomination. There were occasions on which its very enemies could not well refuse to admit its excellence; for in seasons of public distress, its adherents often signalized themselves as by far the most energetic, benevolent, and useful citizens. At such times its genial philanthropy appeared to singular advantage when contrasted with the cold and selfish spirit of polytheism.

[1] Tertullian, "De Praescrip." c. 20.

[2] Thus, on one occasion, Cyprian raised a contribution of about $4,500 in Carthage to purchase the release of some Christians of Numidia. Cyprian, Epi . lx., p. 216. Tertullian said to the heathen, "Our charity dispenses more in every street than your religion in each temple."—*Apol.*, c. 42.

Thus, in the reign of the Emperor Gallus, when a pestilence spread dismay throughout North Africa,[1] and when the pagans shamefully deserted their nearest relatives in the hour of their extremity, the Christians stepped forward, and ministered to the wants of the sick and dying without distinction.[2] Some years afterward, when the plague desolated Alexandria, and when the Gentile inhabitants left the dead unburied and cast out the dying into the streets, the disciples vied with each other in their efforts to alleviate the general suffering.[3] The most worthless men can scarcely forget acts of kindness performed under such circumstances. Forty years afterward, when the Church in the capital of Egypt was overtaken by the Diocletian persecution, their pagan neighbors concealed the Christians in their houses, and submitted to fines and imprisonment rather than betray the refugees.[4]

The fact that the heathen were ready to shelter the persecuted members of the Church is itself of importance as a sign of the times. When the disciples first began to rise into notice in the great towns, they were commonly regarded with aversion; and, when the citizens were assembled in thousands at the national spectacles, no cry was more vociferously repeated than that of "The Christians to the lions." But this bigoted and intolerant spirit was fast passing away; and when the State now set on foot a persecution, it could not reckon so extensively on the support of popular antipathy. The Church had attained such a position that the calumnies once repeated to its prejudice could no longer obtain credence; the superior excellence of its system of morals was visible to all; and it could point on every side to the blessings it communicated. It could demonstrate, by a reference to its history, that it produced kind masters and dutiful servants, affectionate parents and obedient children, faithful friends and benevolent citizens. On all classes, whether rich or poor, learned or unlearned, its effects were beneficial. It elevated the character of the work-

[1] About A.D. 252.

[2] Cyprian, "Ad Demetrianum," and "De Mortalitate." "Vita Cypriani per Pontium," c. 9.

[3] Euseb. vii. 22. [4] Athanasius, "Hist. Arian. ad Monachos," § 64.

ing classes, it vastly improved the position of the wife, it comforted the afflicted, and it taught even senators wisdom. Its doctrines, whether preached to the half-naked Picts or the polished Athenians, to the fierce tribes of Germany or the literary coteries of Alexandria, exerted the same holy and happy influence. It promulgated a religion obviously fitted for all mankind. There had long since been a prediction that its dominion would extend "from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth"; and its progress already indicated that the promise was receiving its accomplishment.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHURCH OF ROME IN THE SECOND CENTURY.

THE great doctrines of Christianity are built on *the facts* of the life of our Lord. These facts are related by the four evangelists with singular precision, and yet with a variety of statement, as to details, which proves that each writer delivered an independent testimony. The witnesses all agree when describing the wonderful history of the Captain of our Salvation; and they dwell upon the narrative with a minuteness corresponding to the importance of the *doctrine* which the facts establish or illustrate. Hence it is that, while they scarcely notice, or altogether omit, several items of our Saviour's biography, they speak particularly of His birth and of His miracles, of His death and of His resurrection. Thus, all the great facts of the Gospel are most amply authenticated.

It is not so with the system of Romanism; as nothing can be weaker than the historical basis on which it rests. The New Testament demonstrates that Peter was *not* the Prince of the Apostles; for it records the rebuke which our Lord delivered to the Twelve when they strove among themselves "which of them should be accounted the greatest."[1] It also supplies evidence that neither Peter nor Paul founded the Church of Rome; as, before that Church had been visited by the Apostle of the Gentiles, its faith was "spoken of throughout the whole world";[2] and the apostle of the circumcision was meanwhile laboring in another part of the Empire.[3] When writing to the Romans in A.D. 57, Paul greets many members of the Church, and mentions the names of a great variety of individuals;[4]

[1] Luke xxii. 24–26.
[2] Rom. i. 8, 13.
[3] Gal. ii. 7–9.
[4] Rom. xvi. 3–15.

but, throughout his long epistle, Peter is not once noticed. Had he been connected with that Christian community, he would, beyond doubt, have been prominently recognized.

There is, indeed, a sense in which Peter may, perhaps, be said to have founded the great Church of the West; for it is possible that some of the "strangers of Rome,"[1] who heard his celebrated sermon on the day of Pentecost, were then converted by his ministry; and that these converts, on their return home, disseminated the truth, and organized a Christian society, in the chief city of the Empire. This, however, is but matter of conjecture; and it is now useless to speculate on the subject; as, in the absence of historical materials to furnish us with information, the question must remain involved in impenetrable mystery. It is certain that the Roman Church was established long before it was visited by an apostle; and it is equally clear that its members were distinguished, at an early period, by their Christian excellence. When Paul was a prisoner for the first time in the great city, he was freely permitted to exercise his ministry; but, subsequently, when there during the Neronian persecution, he was, according to the current tradition, seized and put to death.[2] Peter's martyrdom took place, probably, some time afterward; but the legend describing it contains very improbable details, and the facts have obviously been distorted and exaggerated.

For at least seventy years after the death of the apostle of the circumcision, nothing whatever is known of the history of the Roman Church, except the names of some of its leading ministers. It was originally governed, like other Christian communities, by the common council of the presbyters, who, as a matter of order, had a chairman; but though, about a hundred years after the martyrdom of Paul, when the presidents began to be designated *bishops*, an attempt was made to settle their order of succession,[3] the result was by no

[1] Acts ii. 10.

[2] Euseb. ii. 22.

[3] Hegesippus was the first who attempted to draw up a list of the bishops, or presiding presbyters of Rome. See Pearson's Criticism on Euseb. iv. 22, in his "Minor Works," vol. ii., p. 319, Oxford, 1844; and Routh's "Reliquiæ," i., pp. 270, 271.

means satisfactory. Some of the earliest writers who touch incidentally on the question, are inconsistent with themselves [1] and flatly contradict each other.[2] In fact, to this day, what is called the episcopal succession in the ancient Church of Rome, is an historical riddle. At first no one individual acted for life as the president or moderator of the presbytery, but, as it was well known that at an early date several eminent pastors had belonged to it, the most distinguished names found their way into the catalogues, and each writer consulted his own taste or judgment in regulating the order of succession. Thus it has occurred that their lists are utterly irreconcilable. All such genealogies are, indeed, of exceedingly dubious credit, and those who deem them of importance must always be perplexed by the candid acknowledgment of the father of ecclesiastical history. "How many," says he, "and who, prompted by a kindred spirit, were judged fit to feed the churches established by the apostles, it *is not easy to say, any farther than may be gathered from the statements of Paul.*" [3]

About A.D. 139, Telesphorus, then at the head of the Roman presbytery, was put to death for his profession of the Gospel; but the earliest authority for this fact is a Christian controversialist who wrote upward of forty years afterward; [4] and we are totally ignorant of all the circumstances connected with the martyrdom. The Church of the capital, which had hitherto enjoyed internal tranquillity, began in the time of Hyginus, who succeeded Telesphorus, to be disturbed by false teachers. Valentine, Cerdo, and other famous heresiarchs, ap-

[1] Thus, Irenæus (i. 27) speaks of Hyginus as the *ninth*, and again (iii. 3), as the *eighth* in succession from the apostles.

[2] Thus, Irenæus affirms (iii. 3) that Linus was the immediate successor of the apostles, whilst Tertullian, who was his contemporary, and who possessed equally good means of information, assigns that position to Clement. "De Præscrip. Hæret." c. 32.

[3] Euseb., iii. 4. In the Preface to his History he describes himself as entering on a "solitary and trackless course," where he could not find "even the bare footprints" of former investigators.

[4] Irenæus, "Contra Om. Hær.," iii. 3, § 3. Bunsen has justly remarked that, "with Telesphorus the most obscure period of the Roman Church terminates."—*Hippolytus*, iv., pp. 209, 210.

peared in Rome;[1] and labored with great assiduity to disseminate their principles. The distractions created by these errorists suggested the propriety of placing additional power in the hands of the *presiding presbyter*.[2] Until this period every teaching elder had been accustomed to baptize and administer the Eucharist on his own responsibility; but it was now arranged that henceforth none should act without the sanction of the president, who was thus constituted the centre of ecclesiastical unity. According to the previous system, some of the presbyters, who were themselves tainted with unsound doctrine, might have continued to hold communion with the heretics; and it would have been exceedingly difficult to convict them of any direct breach of ecclesiastical law; but now their power was curtailed; and a broad line of demarcation was established between true and false churchmen. Thus, Rome was the city in which what has been called the Catholic system was first organized. Every one in communion with the president, or bishop, was a Catholic;[3] every one who allied himself to any other professed teacher of the Christian faith was a sectary, a schismatic, or a heretic.[4]

The study of the best forms of government was peculiarly congenial to the Roman mind; and the peace enjoyed under the Empire, as contrasted with the miseries of the civil wars in the last days of the Republic, pleaded strongly in favor of a change in the ecclesiastical constitution. But though this portion of the history of the Church is involved in much obscurity, there are indications that the transference of power from the presbyters to their president was not accomplished without a struggle. Until this period the Roman elders gen-

[1] Irenæus, iii. 4, § 3.

[2] This name continued to be given to the Roman bishop till at least the close of the second century. See Irenæus quoted in Euseb. v. 24.

[3] *καθολικὸς*. See this subject more fully illustrated in Period ii., sec. iii., chap. viii. See also Cooper's "Free Church of Ancient Christendom," pp. 227–8.

[4] "Qui absistunt a principali successione, et quocunque loco colligunt, suspectos habere (oportet) vel quasi hæreticos et malæ sententiæ; vel quasi scindentes et elatos et sibi placentes; aut rursus ut hypocritas, quæstus gratia et vanæ gloriæ hoc operantes." Irenæus, iv. 26, § 2.

erally succeeded each other as moderators of presbytery in the order of their seniority;[1] but it was now deemed necessary to adopt another method of appointment; and it would appear that, at this time, a division of sentiment as to the best mode of filling up the presidential chair, was the cause of an unusually long vacancy. According to some, no less than four years[2] passed away between the death of Hyginus and the choice of his successor, Pius; and even those who object to this view of the chronology admit that there was an interval of a twelvemonth.[3] The plan adopted was to choose the bishop by lot out of a leet of selected candidates.[4] Thus, to use the phraseology current toward the end of the second century, the new chief pastor "obtained *the lot* of the episcopacy."[5]

The changes introduced at Rome were far from agreeable to many other Churches throughout the Empire; and Polycarp, the venerable pastor of Smyrna, afterward martyred, and now nearly eighty years of age, was sent to the imperial city on a mission of remonstrance. This remarkable visit is still enveloped in much mystery, for with the exception of an allusion to a question confessedly of secondary consequence,[6] ecclesiastical writers have passed over the whole subject in suspicious silence; but there is every reason to believe that Polycarp was deputed to complain of the incipient assump-

[1] See Period ii., sec. iii., chap. vii.

[2] Blondel's "Apologia pro sententia Hieronymi," p. 18. Under ordinary circumstances the new president, or bishop, was often elected before his predecessor was buried. See Bingham, book ii., c. xi., § 2.

[3] See Pearson's "Minor Works," ii. 520.

[4] This method of appointment continued to be observed long afterward in some parts of the Church. See Bingham, book iv., chap. i., sec. i. At Alexandria, in the beginning of the fourth century, the presbyters selected three of their senior members, of whom the people chose one. Cotelerius, ii., app., p. 180. See also the canon of a council held at Barcelona, A.D. 599, quoted in "Columbanus ad Hibernos," Letter i., p. 29.

[5] Τὸν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς κλῆρον. "Irenæus," ed. Stieren, i., p. 433.

[6] The Paschal feast. Irenæus admits that this point formed only a subordinate topic of discussion. See Stieren's "Irenæus," i., p. 826, note 6.

tions of Roman prelacy.[1] Anicetus, who then presided over the Church of the capital, prudently bestowed very flattering attentions on the good old Asiatic pastor; and, though there is no evidence that his scruples were removed, he felt it to be his duty to assist in opposing the corrupt teachers who were seeking to propagate their errors among the Roman disciples. The testimony to primitive truth delivered by so aged and eminent a minister produced a deep impression, and gave a decided check to the progress of heresy in the metropolis of the Empire.[2]

But though prelacy so soon encountered opposition, the innovation inaugurated in the great city was sure to exert a most extensive influence. Rome was then, not only the capital, but the mistress of a large portion of the world. She kept up a constant communication with every part of her dominions in Asia, Africa, and Europe; strangers from almost every clime were to be found among her teeming population; and intelligence of whatever occurred within her walls quickly found its way to distant cities and provinces. The Christians in other countries were slow to believe that their brethren at headquarters had consented to any unwarrantable distribution of Church power, for they had hitherto displayed their zeal for the faith by most decisive and illustrious testimonies. Since the days of Nero they had sustained the first shock of every persecution, and nobly led the van of the army of martyrs. Telesphorus, the chairman of the presbytery, had recently paid for his position with his life; their presiding pastor was always specially obnoxious to the spirit of intolerance; and if they were anxious to strengthen his hands, who could complain? The Roman Church had the credit of having enjoyed the tuition of eminent teachers; its members had long been distinguished for intelligence and piety; and it was not to be supposed that its ministers had sanctioned any step which they did not consider perfectly capable of vindication. There were other weighty reasons why Christian societies in Italy, as well as

[1] See Period ii., sec. iii., chap. vii.

[2] Euseb. iv. 14.

elsewhere, regarded the acts of the Church of the imperial city with peculiar indulgence. It was the sentinel at the seat of government to give them notice of the approach of danger,[1] and the kind friend to aid them in times of difficulty. The wealth of Rome was prodigious; and though as yet "not many mighty" and "not many noble" had joined the proscribed sect, it had been making way among the middle classes; and there is cause to think that at this time a considerable number of the rich merchants of the capital belonged to its communion. It was known early in the second century as a liberal benefactor; and, from a letter addressed to it about A.D. 170, it would appear that even the Church of Corinth was then indebted to its munificence. "It has ever been your habit," says the writer, "to confer benefits in various ways, and to send assistance to the Churches in every city. You have relieved the wants of the poor, and afforded help to the brethren condemned to the mines. By a succession of these gifts, Romans, you preserve the customs of your Roman ancestors."[2]

The influence of the Roman Church throughout the West soon became conspicuous. Here, as in many other instances, commerce was the pioneer of religion, and as the merchants of the capital traded with all the ports of their great inland sea, their sailors had a share in achieving some of the early triumphs of the Gospel. Carthage, one of the most populous cities in the Empire, was indebted for Christianity to Rome;[3] and by means of the constant intercourse kept up between these two commercial marts, the mother Church maintained an ascendency over her African daughter. Thus it was that

[1] Cyprian speaks of sending messengers to Rome "to ascertain and report as to any rescript published respecting" the Christians. "Epist. ad Successum." The Roman clergy could at once supply the information.

[2] Extract of a letter from Dionysius of Corinth, preserved in Eusebius, iv. 23.

[3] The testimonies to this fact may be found discussed in Münter's "Primordia Ecclesiæ Africanæ," p. 10. Herodian, who flourished in the third century, speaks of Carthage as the next city after Rome in size and wealth. Lib. vii. 6.

certain Romish practices and pretensions so soon found advocates among the Carthaginian clergy.[1] In other quarters we discover early indications of the extraordinary deference paid to the Church of the city "sitting upon many waters." Toward the close of the second century, Irenæus, a disciple of Polycarp, was pastor of Lyons; and from this some have rather abruptly drawn the inference that the Christian congregations then existing in the south of France were established by missionaries from the East; but it is at least equally probable that the young minister from Asia Minor was in Rome before he passed to the more distant Gaul; and he is the first father who speaks of the superior importance of the Church of the Italian metropolis.[2] His testimony to the position which it occupied about eighty years after the death of the Apostle John, shows clearly that it stood already at the head of the Western Churches. The Church of Rome, says he, is "very great and very ancient, and known to all, founded and established by the two most glorious Apostles Peter and Paul."[3] "To this Church, in which Catholics[4] have always preserved apostolic tradition, every Catholic Church should, because it is more potentially apostolical,[5] repair."[6]

The term *Catholic*, which occurs for the first time in a docu-

[1] In this way we readily account for various statements in Tertullian and Cyprian.

[2] That he acted as the champion of the Church of Rome appears from Euseb. v. 20.

[3] We here see how a father who wrote so soon after the apostolic age, blunders egregiously respecting the history of the Apostolic Church.

[4] So I understand "his qui sunt undique." See Wordsworth's "Hippolytus," p. 200. We have thus a remarkable proof that the word *catholic* was not in ecclesiastical use among the Latins when Irenæus wrote, for his translator here expresses the idea by a circumlocution. See Irenæus, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Book iii., 11, p. 293, note, and iii. 15, p. 321, note.

[5] "Propter potentiorem principalitatem."

[6] Irenæus, iii. 3. See on this passage Gieseler, by Cunningham, i. 97, note. See also Period ii., sec. iii., chap. viii.

ment written about this period,[1] was probably coined at Rome; and implied, as already intimated, that the individual so designated was in communion with the bishop. The presiding pastors in the great city began now, in token of fraternity and recognition, to send the Eucharist to their brethren elsewhere by trusty messengers,[2] and thus the name was soon extended to all who maintained ecclesiastical relations with these leading ministers. Sectaries were almost always the minority; and in many places, where Christianity was planted, they were utterly unknown. The orthodox could, therefore, not inappropriately be styled members of the *Catholic* or *general* Church, inasmuch as they formed the bulk of the Christian population, and were found wherever the new religion had made converts. And though the heretics pleaded tradition in support of their peculiar dogmas, their statements could not stand the test of examination. Irenæus, in the work from which the words just quoted are extracted, very fairly argues that no such traditions as those propagated by the sectaries were known in the most ancient and respectable Churches. No Christian community in Western Europe claimed higher antiquity than that of Rome; and as it had been taught, as he alleges, by Paul and Peter, none should have been better acquainted with the original Gospel. Because of its extent it already required a larger staff of ministers than any other Church; and thus there were a greater number of individuals to quicken and correct each other's recollections. It was accordingly to be inferred that the traditions of surrounding Christian societies, if true, should correspond to those of Rome; as the great metropolitan Church could, for various reasons, be said to be more potentially primitive or apostolical, and as its traditions should have been particularly accurate. The doctrines of the heretics,

[1] The circular letter relating to the martyrdom of Polycarp quoted in Euseb. iv. 15. It was written a considerable time after the death of the martyr, as it speaks of the way in which his *memory* was cherished when it was drawn up. § 19.

[2] Irenæus quoted in Euseb. v. 24. See Period ii., sec. iii., chap. viii.

which were opposed to the testimony of this important witness, were to be discarded as destitute of authority.

We can only conjecture the route by which Irenæus travelled to the south of France when he first set out from Asia Minor; but we have direct evidence that he had paid a visit to the capital shortly before he wrote this memorable eulogium on the Roman Church. About the close of the dreadful persecution endured in A.D. 177 by the Christians of Lyons and Vienne, he had been commissioned to repair to Italy with a view to a settlement of the disputes created by the appearance of the Montanists. As he was furnished with very complimentary credentials,[1] he was handsomely treated by his friends in the metropolis; and if he returned home laden with presents to disciples whose sufferings had recently so deeply moved the sympathy of their brethren, it is not strange that he gracefully seized an opportunity of extolling the Church to which he owed such obligations. His account of its greatness is obviously the inflated language of a panegyrist; but in due time its hyperbolic statements received a still more extravagant interpretation; and, on the authority of this ancient father, the Church of Rome was pompously announced as the mistress and the mother of all Churches.

It has been mentioned in a former chapter[2] that the celebrated Marcia, who, till shortly before his death, possessed almost absolute control over the Emperor Commodus, made a profession of the faith. Her example encouraged other personages of distinction to connect themselves with the Roman Church;[3] and, through the medium of these members of his flock, the bishop Eleutherius had an influence such as none of his predecessors possessed. It is beyond doubt that Marcia, after consulting with Victor, the successor of Eleutherius, induced the Emperor to perform acts of kindness to some of her co-religionists.[4] The favor of the court puffed up the spirit of this naturally haughty churchman; and though, as we have seen, certain ecclesiastical movements in the chief

[1] We have an extract from them in Euseb. v. 4.

[2] Period ii., sec. i., chap. ii., p. 268.

[3] See Euseb. v. 21.

[4] Hippolytus, "Refut. Om. Hæres.," book ix.

city had long before excited much ill-suppressed dissatisfaction, the Christian commonwealth was now startled for the first time by a very flagrant exhibition of the arrogance of a Roman prelate.[1] Because the Churches of Asia Minor celebrated the Paschal feast in a way different from that observed in the metropolis,[2] Victor cut them off from his communion. But this attempt of the bishop of the great city to act as lord over God's heritage was premature. Other churches condemned the rashness of his procedure; his refusal to hold fellowship with the Asiatic Christians threatened only to isolate himself; and he soon found it expedient to cultivate more pacific councils.

At this time the jurisdiction of Victor did not properly extend beyond the few ministers and congregations in the imperial city. A quarter of a century afterward even the bishop of Portus, a seaport town at the mouth of the Tiber, fifteen miles distant from the capital, acknowledged no allegiance to the Roman prelate.[3] The boldness of Victor in pronouncing so many foreign brethren unworthy of Catholic communion may at first, therefore, appear unaccountable. But he acted, in this instance, in conjunction with many other pastors. Among the Churches of Gentile origin there was a deep prejudice against what was considered the Judaizing of the Asiatic Christians in relation to the Paschal festival, and a strong impression that the character of the Church was compromised by any very marked diversity in its religious observances. There is, however, reason to think that Victor was to some extent prompted by motives of a different complexion. Fifty

[1] This occurred early in the reign of Septimius Severus, who at first is said to have been very favorable to the Church. Shortly before, many in Rome of great wealth and eminent station had become Christians.—Euseb. v., c. 21.

[2] See a more minute account of this controversy in Period ii., sec. iii., chap. xii. Eusebius describes Victor as attempting to cut off these churches "*from the common unity*," v. 24.

[3] This is evident from the fact that Hippolytus is scarcely willing to recognize some of the Roman bishops, his contemporaries. But both parties probably belonged to the same synod. Hippolytus was the leader of a formidable opposition.

years before, the remarkable words addressed to the apostle of the circumcision—"Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church"[1]—were interpreted at Rome in the way in which they are understood commonly by Protestants; for the brother of the Roman bishop Pius,[2] writing about A.D. 150, teaches that the Rock on which the Church is built is the Son of God;[3] but ingenuity was already beginning to discover another exposition, and the growing importance of the Roman bishopric suggested the startling thought that the Church was built on Peter![4] The name of the Galilean fisherman began to be connected with the see of Victor; and it was easy for ambition or flattery to draw the inference that Victor himself was in some way the heir and representative of the great apostle. The doctrine that the bishop was necessary at the centre of Catholic unity had already gained currency; and if a centre of unity for the whole Church was also indispensable, who had a better claim to the pre-eminence than the successor of Peter? When Victor fulminated his sentence of excommunication against the Asiatic Christians he acted under the

[1] Matt. xvi. 18.

[2] See the Muratorian fragment in Bunsen's "Analecta Ante-Nicæna," i. 154, 155. This, according to Bunsen, is a fragment of a work of Hegesippus, and written about A.D. 165. Hippolytus, i. 314.

[3] "Hermæ Pastor," lib. iii., simil. ix., § 12–14. "Petra hæc . . . . Filius Dei est. . . . . Quid est deinde hæc turris? Hæc, inquit, ecclesia est. . . . . Demonstra mihi quare non in terra ædificatur hæc turris, sed supra petram."

[4] Tertullian, "De Præscrip." xxii. "Latuit aliquid Petrum ædificandæ ecclesiæ petram dictum?" Tertullian here speaks of the doctrine as already current. Even after he became a Montanist, he still adhered to the same interpretation—"Petrum solum invenio maritum, per socrum; monogamum præsumo per *ecclesiam, quæ super illum ædificata* omnem gradum ordinis sui de monogamis erat collocatura."—*De Monogamia*, c. viii. Again, in another Montanist tract, he says: "Qualis es, evertens atque commutans manifestam domini intentionem personaliter hoc Petro conferentem? *Super te*, inquit, *ædificabo ecclesiam meam*."—*De Pudicitia*, c. xxi. See also "De Præscrip.," c. xxii. According to Origen, every believer, as well as Peter, is the foundation of the Church. "Contra Celsum," vi. 77. See also "Comment. in Matthæum xii.," Opera, tom. iii., pp. 524, 526.

partial inspiration of this novel theory. He made an abortive attempt to speak in the name of the whole Church—to assert a position as the representative or president of all the bishops of the Catholic world[1]—and to carry out a new system of ecclesiastical unity. The experiment was a failure, simply because the idea looming in the imagination of the Roman bishop had not yet obtained full possession of the mind of Christendom.

Prelacy had been employed as the cure for Church divisions, but the remedy had proved worse than the disease. Sects meanwhile continued to multiply; and they were nowhere so abundant as in the very city where the new machinery had been set up for their suppression. Toward the close of the second century their multitude was one of the standing reproaches of Christianity. What was called the Catholic Church was now on the brink of a great schism; and the very man who aspired to be the centre of Catholic unity, threatened to be the cause of the disruption. It was becoming more and more apparent that, when the presbyters consented to surrender any portion of their privileges to the bishop, they betrayed the cause of ecclesiastical freedom; and even now indications were not wanting that the Catholic system was likely to degenerate into a spiritual despotism.

[1] See this subject more fully explained in Period ii., sec. iii., ch. viii.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHURCH OF ROME IN THE THIRD CENTURY.

THOUGH very few of the genuine productions of the ministers of the ancient Church of Rome are still extant,[1] multitudes of spurious epistles attributed to its early bishops have been carefully preserved. It is easy to account for this apparent anomaly. The documents known as the false Decretals,[2] and ascribed to the Popes of the first and immediately succeeding centuries, were suited to the taste of times of ignorance, and were peculiarly grateful to the occupants of the Roman see. As evidences of its original superiority they were accordingly transmitted to posterity, and ostentatiously exhibited among the Papal title-deeds. But the real compositions of the primitive pastors of the great city supplied little food for superstition; and contained startling and humiliating revelations which laid bare the absurdity of claims subsequently advanced. These unwelcome witnesses were, therefore, quietly permitted to pass into oblivion.

It is said, however, that Truth is the daughter of Time, and the discovery of monuments long since forgotten, or of writings supposed to be lost, has often wonderfully verified and illustrated the apologue. The reappearance, within the

[1] Even the letters of Victor, which created such a sensation throughout the Church, are not forthcoming. See Pearson's "Vindiciæ Ignatianæ," pars 2, cap. 13, as to the spuriousness of those imputed to him.

[2] They extend from Clement, who, according to some lists, was the first Pope, to Syricius, who was made Bishop of Rome A.D. 384. All candid writers, whether Romanists or Protestants, now acknowledge them to be forgeries. They may be found in "Binii Concilia." They made their appearance, for the first time, about the eighth century or shortly afterward.

last three hundred years, of various ancient records and memorials, has shed a new light on the history of antiquity. Other testimonies equally valuable will, no doubt, yet be forthcoming for the settlement of existing controversies.

In A.D. 1551, as some workmen in the neighborhood of Rome were employed in clearing away the ruins of a dilapidated chapel, they found a broken mass of sculptured marble among the rubbish. The fragments, when put together, proved to be a statue representing a person of venerable aspect sitting in a chair, on the back of which were the names of various publications. It was ascertained, on more minute examination, that, some time after the establishment of Christianity by Constantine,[1] this monument had been erected in honor of Hippolytus—a learned writer and able controversialist, who had been bishop of Portus in the early part of the third century, and who had finished his career by martyrdom, about A.D. 236, during the persecution under the Emperor Maximin. Hippolytus is commemorated as a saint in the Romish Breviary;[2] and the resurrection of his statue, after it had been buried a thousand years, created quite a sensation among his Papal admirers. Experienced sculptors, under the auspices of the Pontiff, Pius IV., restored the fragments to nearly their previous condition; and the renovated statue was then duly honored with a place in the Library of the Vatican.[3]

Nearly three hundred years afterward, or in 1842, a manuscript which had been found in a Greek monastery at Mount Athos, was deposited in the Royal Library at Paris. This work, which has been since published,[4] and which is entitled

[1] This is the date assigned to its erection by Bunsen, but Dr. Wordsworth argues that it was erected earlier.

[2] 22d August.

[3] It has since been removed to the museum of the Lateran. According to Mr. Northcote ("Roman Catacombs," p. 85), it is "spoken of by Winckelmann, and other critics, as the finest specimen of ancient Christian sculpture in existence."

[4] The first edition appeared at Oxford in 1851, exactly three hundred years after the discovery of the statue.

"Philosophumena, or a Refutation of all Heresies," has been identified as the production of Hippolytus. It is not named in the list of his writings mentioned on the back of the marble chair; but any one who inspects its contents can satisfactorily account for its exclusion from that catalogue. It reflects strongly on the character and principles of some of the early Roman bishops; and as the Papal see was fast rising into power when the statue was erected, it was obviously deemed prudent to omit an invidious publication. The writer of the "Philosophumena" declares that he is the author of one of the books named on that piece of ancient sculpture, and various other facts amply corroborate his testimony. There is, therefore, no good reason to doubt that a Christian bishop who lived about fifteen miles from Rome and who flourished little more than one hundred years after the death of the Apostle John, composed the newly discovered Treatise.[1]

In accordance with the title of his work, Hippolytus here reviews all the heresies which had been broached up till the date of its publication. Long prior to the reappearance of this production, it was known that one of the early Roman bishops had been induced to countenance the errors of the Montanists;[2] and it would seem that Victor was the individual thus deceived;[3] but it had not been before suspected that Zephyrinus and Callistus, the two bishops next to him in succession,[4] held unsound views respecting the doctrine of the Trinity. Such, however, is the testimony of their neighbor and contemporary, the bishop of Portus. The witness may, indeed, be somewhat fastidious, as he was himself both erudite and eloquent; but had there not been some glaring deficiency in both the creed and the character of the chief

[1] This point has been established by Bunsen and Wordsworth. According to Kurtz and others, Hippolytus was a schismatic bishop at Rome. See Kurtz's "History of the Christian Church by Edersheim," pp. 133, 137.

[2] This is expressly stated by Tertullian, "Adversus Praxeam," c. i.

[3] See Bower's "History of the Popes." Victor, 13th Bishop.

[4] According to the commonly received chronology, Victor occupied the papal chair from A.D. 192 to A.D. 201; Zephyrinus from A.D. 201 to A.D. 219; and Callistus from A.D. 219 to A.D. 223.

pastor of Rome, Hippolytus would scarcely have described Zephyrinus as "an illiterate and covetous man,"[1] "unskilled in ecclesiastical science,"[2] and a disseminator of heretical doctrine. According to the statement of his accuser, he confounded the First and Second Persons of the Godhead, maintaining the identity of the Father and the Son.[3]

Callistus, who was made bishop on the death of Zephyrinus, possessed a far more vigorous intellect than his predecessor. Though regarded by the orthodox Hippolytus with no friendly eye, he was endowed with an extraordinary share of energy and perseverance. He had been originally a slave, and he must have won the confidence of his wealthy Christian master, Carpophorus, for he had been intrusted by him with the care of a savings bank. The establishment became insolvent, in consequence, as Hippolytus alleges, of the mismanagement of its conductor; and many widows and others who had committed their money to his keeping, lost their deposits. When Carpophorus, by whom he was suspected of embezzlement, determined to call him to account, Callistus fled to Portus—in the hope of escaping by sea to some other country. He was, however, overtaken; and, after an ineffectual attempt to drown himself, was arrested and thrown into prison. His master, placable and kind-hearted, speedily consented to release him from confinement; but he was no sooner at large, than, under pretence of collecting debts due to the savings bank, he went into a Jewish synagogue during the time of public worship, and caused such disturbance that he was seized and dragged before the city prefect. The magistrate ordered him first to be scourged, and then transported to the mines of Sardinia. He did not remain long in exile; for, about this time, Marcia procured

[1] *ἀνδρὸς ἰδιώτου καὶ αἰσχροκερδοῦς.* [2] *ἄπειρον τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν ὁρων.*

[3] "Philosophumena," book ix. Dr. Döllinger, in a recent work ("Hippolytus and Callistus, or the Church of Rome in the first half of the Third Century"), maintains that Hippolytus was an anti-Pope set up in opposition to Callistus. He admits, however, the genuineness of the "Philosophumena." He contends that Portus was not a bishopric in the time of Hippolytus; but he has certainly failed to establish that point.

from the Emperor Commodus an order for the release of the Christians banished to that unhealthy island; and Callistus, though not included in the act of grace, contrived to prevail upon the governor to set him at liberty along with the other prisoners. He now returned to Rome, where he acquired the reputation of a changed character. In due time he procured an appointment to one of the lower ecclesiastical offices; and as he possessed much talent, he did not find it difficult to obtain promotion. When Zephyrinus was advanced to the episcopate, Callistus, his special favorite, became one of the leading ministers of the Roman Church; and exercised an almost unbounded sway over the mind of the superficial and time-serving bishop. The Christians of the chief city were split up into parties, some advocating the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, and others abetting a different theory. Callistus dexterously availed himself of their divisions; and, by inducing each faction to believe that he espoused its cause, managed, on the death of Zephyrinus, to secure his election to the vacant dignity.

When Callistus had attained the object of his ambition, he tried to restore peace to the Church by endeavoring to persuade the advocates of the antagonistic principles to make mutual concessions. Laying aside the reserve which he had hitherto maintained, he now took up an intermediate position, in the hope that both parties would accept his own theory of the Godhead. "He invented," says Hippolytus, "such a heresy as follows. He said that the Word is the Son and is also the Father, being called by different names, but being one indivisible spirit; and that the Father is not one and the Son another (person), but that they both are one and the same. . . . . The Father, having taken human flesh, deified it by uniting it to Himself, ... and so he said that the Father had suffered with the Son."[1]

Though Callistus, as well as Hippolytus, is recognized as a saint in the Romish Breviary,[2] it is thus certain that the bishop of Portus regarded the bishop of Rome as a schemer and a heretic. At this period, all bishops were on a level of equal-

[1] "Philosophumena," book ix.

[2] 14th October.

ity, for Hippolytus, though the pastor of a town in the neighborhood of the chief city, did not acknowledge Callistus as his metropolitan. The bishop of Portus describes himself as one of those who are "successors of the apostles, partakers with them of the same grace both of principal priesthood and doctorship, and reckoned among the guardians of the Church."[1] Hippolytus testifies that Callistus was afraid of him,[2] and if both were members of the same synod,[3] well might the heterodox prelate stand in awe of a minister who possessed co-ordinate authority, with greater honesty and superior erudition. But still, it is plain, from the admissions of the "Philosophumea," that the bishop of Rome, in the time of the author of this treatise, was beginning to presume upon his position. Hippolytus complains of his irregularity in receiving into his communion some who had been "cast out of the Church" of Portus "after judicial sentence."[4] Had the bishop of the harbor of Rome been subject to the bishop of the capital, he would neither have expressed himself in such a style, nor preferred such an accusation.

Various circumstances indicate, as has already been suggested, that the bishop of Rome, in the time of the Antonines, was chosen by lot; but we infer from the "Philosophumena" that, early in the third century, another mode of appointment had been adopted.[5] He now owed his advancement to the suffrages of the Church members, for Hippolytus hints very broadly that Callistus pursued a particular course with a view to promote his popularity and secure his election.

[1] "Philosophumena," book i., procemium.

[2] δεδοικὼς ἐμέ.

[3] Bunsen describes Hippolytus as "a member of the Roman presbytery" ("Hippolytus," i. 313), but he is here evidently mistaken. Hippolytus was at the head of a presbytery of his own, the presbytery of Portus. The presbytery of Rome was confined to the elders or presbyters of that city. The *presbyter* Hippolytus mentioned by some ancient writers was a quite different person from the bishop of Portus.

[4] "Philosophumena," book ix.

[5] It is probable that the bishop was at first chosen by lot out of a leet of three selected by the presbytery from among its members. (See preceding chapter, p. 303, note). An appointment was now made out of this leet of three, not by lot, but by popular suffrage.

About A.D. 236, Fabian was chosen bishop of Rome by the votes of the whole brotherhood, and there is on record a minute account of certain extraordinary circumstances which signalized the occasion. "When all the brethren had assembled in the church for the purpose of choosing their future bishop, and when the names of many worthy and distinguished men had suggested themselves to the consideration of the multitude, no one so much as thought of Fabian, who was then present. They relate, however, that a dove gliding down from the roof, settled directly on his head, as when the Holy Spirit, like a dove, rested upon the head of our Saviour. On this, the whole people, as if animated by one divine impulse, with great eagerness, and with the utmost unanimity, exclaimed that he was worthy; and, taking hold of him, placed him forthwith on the bishop's chair."[1]

Some time after the resurrection of the statue of Hippolytus, another revelation was made in the neighborhood of Rome which has thrown much light upon its early ecclesiastical history. In the latter part of the sixteenth century, the unusual appearance of some apertures in the ground,[2] not far from the Papal capital, awakened curiosity, and led to the discovery of dark subterranean passages of immense extent filled with monuments and inscriptions. These dismal regions, after having been shut up for about eight hundred years, were then reopened and re-explored.

The soil for miles around Rome is undermined, and the long labyrinths thus created are called catacombs.[3] The galleries are often found in stories two or three deep, communicating with each other by stairs; and formerly some of them were partially lighted from above. They were originally gravel-pits or stone-quarries, and were commenced long before the reign of Augustus.[4] The enlargement of the city, and the

[1] Euseb. vi. 29.

[2] These apertures were revealed by the accidental falling in of a portion of the high-road outside the Porta Salara in the year 1578. Northcote, p. 32.

[3] Evidently from κατὰ, *down*, and κύμβος, *a cavity*. Mr. Northcote calculates that the streets, taken together, are 900 miles long!

[4] See "Three Introductory Lectures on Ecclesiastical History," by Wm. Lee, D.D., of Trinity College, Dublin, p. 27.

growing demand for building materials, led them to new and most extensive excavations. In the preparation of these vast caverns, we may trace the presiding care of Providence. As America, discovered a few years before the Reformation, furnished a place of refuge to the Protestants who fled from ecclesiastical intolerance, so the catacombs, reopened shortly before the birth of our Lord, supplied shelter to the Christians in Rome during the frequent proscriptions of the second and third centuries. When the Gospel was first propagated in the imperial city, its adherents belonged chiefly to the lower classes; and, for reasons of which it is now impossible to speak with certainty,[1] it was soon very generally embraced by the quarrymen and sand-diggers.[2] Thus it was that when persecution raged in the capital, the Christian felt himself comparatively safe in the catacombs. The parties in charge of them were his friends; they gave him seasonable intimation of the approach of danger; and among these "dens and caves of the earth," with countless places of ingress and egress, the officers of government attempted in vain to overtake a fugitive.

At present their appearance is most uncomfortable; they contain no chamber sufficient for the accommodation of any large number of worshippers; and it has even been questioned whether human life could be long supported in such gloomy habitations. But we have the best authority for believing that some of the early Christians remained for a considerable time in these asylums.[3] Wells of water have been found in their ob-

[1] It is probable that many were condemned to labor in these mines as a punishment for having embraced Christianity. See Lee's "Three Lectures," p. 28.

[2] Maitland's "Church in the Catacombs," p. 24. Dr. Maitland visited Rome in 1841, but his inspection of the Lapidarian Gallery was regarded with extreme jealousy by the authorities there. After having obtained a license "to make some memoranda in drawing in that part of the Museum," he was officially informed that "his permission *did not extend to the inscriptions*," and the communication was accompanied by a demand that "the copies already made should be given up." To his refusal to yield to this mandate we are indebted for many important memorials to be found in his interesting volume.

[3] See Maitland, pp. 27–29.

scure recesses; fonts for baptism have also been discovered; and it is beyond doubt that the disciples met here for religious exercises. As early as the second century these vaults became the great cemetery of the Church. Many of the memorials of the dead which they contained have long since been transferred to the Lapidarian Gallery in the Vatican; and there, in the palace of the Pope, the venerable tombstones testify, to all who will consult them, how much modern Romanism differs from ancient Christianity.

Though many of these sepulchral monuments were erected in the fourth and fifth centuries, they indicate a remarkable freedom from superstitions with which the religion of the New Testament has been since defiled. These witnesses to the faith of the early Church of Rome altogether repudiate the worship of the Virgin Mary, for the inscriptions of the Lapidarian Gallery, all arranged under the Papal supervision, contain no addresses to the mother of our Lord.[1] They point only to Jesus as the great Mediator, Redeemer, and Friend. It is also worthy of note that the tone of these voices from the grave is eminently cheerful. Instead of speaking of masses for the repose of souls, or representing departed believers as still doomed to pass through purgatory, they describe the deceased as having entered immediately into the abodes of eternal rest. "Alexander," says one of them, "is not dead, but lives beyond the stars, and his body rests in this tomb." "Here," says another, "lies Paulina, in the place of the blessed." "Gemella," says a third, "sleeps in peace." "Aselus," says a fourth, "sleeps in Christ."[2]

We learn from the testimony of Hippolytus that, during the episcopate of Zephyrinus, Callistus was "set over the cemetery."[3] This was considered a highly important trust, as, in those peril-

[1] Maitland, p. 14.

[2] Maitland, pp. 33, 41, 43, 170. Perhaps the earliest specimen of anything like the invocation of saints found among these inscriptions is an epitaph written by Damasus, who was elected Bishop of Rome A.D. 366. Poetical license may permit an apostrophe to the dead on a tombstone. See Northcote, p. 187.

[3] "Philosophumena," book ix.

ous times, the safety of the Christians very much depended on the prudence, activity, and courage of the individual who had charge of their subterranean refuge.[1] The new curator signalized himself by the ability with which he discharged the duties of his appointment; he embellished and enlarged some of these dreary caves; and hence a portion of the catacombs was designated "The Cemetery of Callistus." Hippolytus, led astray by the ascetic spirit beginning so strongly to prevail in the commencement of the third century, was opposed to all second marriages, so that he was sadly scandalized by the exceedingly liberal views of his Roman brother on the subject of matrimony; and he was so ill-informed as to pronounce them novel. "In his time," says he indignantly, "bishops, presbyters, and deacons, though they had been twice or three times married, began to be recognized as God's ministers; and if any one of the clergy married, it was determined that such a person should remain among the clergy, as not having sinned."[2] We can not tell how many of the ancient bishops of the great city were husbands;[3] we have certainly no distinct evidence that even Callistus took to himself a wife; but the primitive Church of Rome did not impose celibacy on her ministers; and in support of this fact, we can produce the unimpeachable testimony of her own catacombs. There is, for instance, a monument "To Basilus the Presbyter, and Felicitas his wife"; and, on another tombstone, erected about A.D. 472, or only four years

[1] As Carthage now furnished Rome with marble and granite, the quarrymen and sand-diggers of the catacombs came frequently into contact with the Carthaginian sailors; and we may thus see how, in the time of Cyprian, there were such facilities for epistolary intercourse between the Churches of Rome and Carthage. Under favorable circumstances, the mariner accomplished the voyage between the two ports in two or three days.

[2] "Philosophumena," book ix. Tertullian corroborates the charges of Hippolytus. See "De Pudicitia," cap i.

[3] We know, however, that, long after this period, married bishops were to be found almost everywhere. One of the most eminent martyrs in the Diocletian persecution was a bishop who had a wife and children. See Eusebius, viii. c. 9. Clemens Romanus, reputed one of the early bishops of the Western capital, speaks as a married man. See his "Epistle to the Corinthians," § 21.

before the fall of the Western Empire, there is the following singular record: "Petronia, a deacon's wife, the type of modesty. In this place I lay my bones; spare your tears, dear husband and daughters, and believe that it is forbidden to weep for one who lives in God."[1] "Here," says another epitaph, "Susanna, the happy daughter of the late Presbyter Gabinus, lies in peace along with her father."[2] In the Lapidarian Gallery of the Papal palace, the curious visitor may still read other epitaphs of the married ministers of Rome.

Though the Gospel continued to make great progress in the metropolis, there was no city of the Empire in which it encountered, from the very first, such steady and powerful opposition. The Sovereign, being himself the Supreme Pontiff of Paganism, was expected to resent, as a personal indignity, any attempt to weaken its influence; and the other great functionaries of idolatry, who all resided in the capital, were bound by the ties of office to resist the advancement of Christianity. The old aristocracy disliked everything in the shape of religious innovation, for they believed that the glory of their country was inseparably connected with an adherence to the worship of the gods of their ancestors. Thus it was that the intolerance of the State was always felt with peculiar severity at the seat of government. Exactly in the middle of the third century a persecution of unusual violence burst upon the Roman Church. Fabian, whose appointment to the bishopric took place, as already related, under such extraordinary circumstances, soon fell a victim to the storm. After his martyrdom, the whole community over which he presided was paralyzed with terror; and sixteen months passed away before any successor was elected; for Decius, the tyrant who ruled the Roman world, had proclaimed his determination rather to suffer a competitor for his throne than a bishop for his chief city.[3] A veritable rival was quickly forthcoming to prove the falsehood of his gasconade; for when Julius Valens disputed his

[1] Maitland, pp. 191–193. These inscriptions may be found also in Aringhi, i. 421, 419.

Aringhi, i. p. 288; Rome, 1651.

[3] Cyprian to Antonianus, Epist. lii., p. 151.

title to the Empire, Decius was obliged, by the pressure of weightier cares, to withdraw his attention from the concerns of the Roman Christians. During the lull in the storm of persecution, Cornelius was chosen bishop; but after an official life of little more than a year, he was thrown into confinement. His death in prison was occasioned by harsh treatment. The episcopate of his successor, Lucius, was even shorter than his own, for he was martyred about six months after his election.[1] Stephen, who was now promoted to the vacant chair, did not long retain possession of it; for though we have no reliable information as to the manner of his death, it is certain that he occupied the bishopric only between four and five years. His successor, Xystus, in less than twelve months finished his course by martyrdom.[2] Thus, in a period of eight years, Rome lost no less than five bishops, at least four of whom were cut down by persecution; of these, Cornelius and Stephen, by far the most distinguished, were interred in the cemetery of Callistus.

There is still extant the fragment of a letter written by Cornelius, furnishing a curious statistical account of the strength of the Roman Church at this period.[3] According to this excellent authority it contained forty-six presbyters, seven deacons, seven sub-deacons, forty-two acolyths, fifty-two others who were either exorcists, readers, or door-keepers, and upwards of fifteen hundred besides, who were in indigent circumstances, and of whom widows constituted a large proportion. All these poor persons were maintained by the liberality of their fellow-worshippers. Rome, as we have seen, was the birth-place of prelacy; and other ecclesiastical organisms unknown to the New Testament may also be traced to the same locality for here we read for the first time of such officials as the acolyths.[4] We may infer from the details sup-

[1] Cyprian speaks of "the blessed Martyrs, Cornelius and Lucius." Epist. lxvii. p. 250.

[2] See Cyprian's "Epistle to Successus," where it is stated that "Xystus was martyred in the cemetery [the catacombs] on the eighth of the Ides of August, and with him four deacons."

[3] This fragment may be found in Euseb. vi. 43.

[4] For an account of their duties see Period ii., sec. iii., chap. x.

plied by the letter of Cornelius, that there were now fourteen congregations[1] of the faithful in the great city; and its Christian population has been estimated at fifty thousand. No wonder that the chief pastor of such a multitude of zealous disciples, all residing in his capital, awakened the jealousy of a suspicious Emperor.

A schism, which continued for generations to exert an unhappy influence, commenced in the metropolis during the short episcopate of Cornelius. The leader of this secession was Novatian, a man of blameless character,[2] and a presbyter of the Roman Church. In the Decian persecution many had been terrified into temporary conformity to paganism; and this austere ecclesiastic maintained that persons who had so sadly compromised themselves, were, on no account whatever, to be readmitted to communion. When he found that he could not prevail on his brethren to adopt this unrelenting discipline, he permitted himself to be ordained bishop in opposition to Cornelius, and became the founder of a separate society, known as the sect of the Novatians. As he denied the validity of the ordinance previously administered, he rebaptized his converts, and exhibited otherwise a miserably contracted spirit; but many sympathized with him in his views, and Novatian bishops were soon established in various parts of the Empire.

Immediately after the rise of this sect, a controversy relative to the propriety of rebaptizing heretics brought the Church of

[1] According to some manuscripts, there were, not forty-six, but forty-two presbyters, seven deacons, seven sub-deacons, and forty-two acolyths. At a later period, we find three presbyters connected with each Roman church. There were fourteen regions in the city, and supposing a congregation in each, there were now three presbyters, one deacon or sub-deacon, and three acolyths belonging to each church. See Blondel's "Apologia," p. 224. Mr. Cooper ("Free Church of Ancient Christendom," p. 293, note, 2d edit.) has remarked that, according to the Martyrium Novatiani, there were only *nine* presbyters at Rome about a year before the date of the letter of Cornelius, and conjectures that the clerical ranks had meanwhile been largely recruited from the confessors.

[2] Cornelius (Euseb. vi. 43) calls him "a malicious beast," but he writes under a feeling of deep mortification.

Rome into collision with many Christian communities in Africa and Asia Minor. The discussion, which did not eventuate in any fresh schism, is chiefly remarkable for the firm stand now made against the assumptions of the great Bishop of the West. When Stephen, who was opposed to rebaptism, discovered that he could not induce the Asiatics and Africans to come over to his sentiments, he rashly tried to overbear them by declaring that he would shut them out from his communion; but his antagonists treated the threat merely as an empty display of insolence. "What strife and contention hast thou awakened in the Churches of the whole world, O Stephen," said one of his opponents, "and how great sin hast thou accumulated when thou didst cut thyself off from so many flocks! Deceive not thyself, for he is truly the schismatic who has made himself an apostate from the communion of the unity of the Church. For whilst thou thinkest that all may be excommunicated by thee, thou hast excommunicated thyself alone from all." [1]

When the apostle of the circumcision said to his Master—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus replied, "*Blessed* art thou, Simon Bar-jona, *for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*" To this emphatic acknowledgment of the faith of His disciple our Lord added the memorable words, "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." [2] As the word Peter signifies *a stone*,[3] this address admits of a very obvious and satisfactory exposition. "Thou art," said Christ to the apostle, "a lively stone[4] of the spiritual structure I erect; and upon this rock on which thy faith is established, as witnessed by thy good confession, I will build my Church; and though the rains of affliction may descend, and

[1] Firmilian, "Cypriani Epistolæ," lxxv.

[2] Matt. xvi. 16–18.

[3] John i. 42.

[4] See 1 Peter ii. 5. Peter adds, as if to illustrate Matt xvi. 18—"Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold I lay in Zion *a chief corner stone*, elect, precious; *and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.*" 1 Pet. ii. 6.

the floods of danger may come, and the winds of temptation may blow, and beat upon this house, it shall remain immovable,[1] because it rests upon an impregnable foundation." But a different interpretation was already gaining wide currency; for though Peter had been led to deny Christ with oaths and imprecations, the rapid growth and preponderating wealth of the Roman bishopric, of which the apostle was said to be the founder, had now induced many to believe that he was the Rock of Salvation, the enduring basis on which the living temple of God was to be reared! Tertullian and Cyprian, in the third century the two most eminent fathers of the West, countenanced the exposition;[2] and though both these writers were lamentably deficient in critical sagacity, men of inferior standing were slow to impugn the verdict of such champions of the faith. Thus it was that a false gloss of Scripture was already enthralling the mind of Christendom; and Stephen boldly renewed the attempt at domination commenced by his predecessor, Victor. His opponents deserved far greater credit for the sturdy independence with which they upheld their individual rights than for the scriptural skill with which they unmasked the sophistry of a delusive theory; for all their reasonings were enervated and vitiated by their stupid admission of the claims of the chair of Peter as the rock on which the Church was supposed to rest.[3] This second effort of Rome to establish her ascendency was, indeed, a failure; but the misinterpretation of Holy Writ, by which it was encouraged, was not effectively corrected and exposed; and thus the great Western

[1] Matt. vii. 24, 25.

[2] See Tertullian, "De Præscrip." xxii.; and Cyprian to Cornelius, Epist. lv., p. 178, where he says, "Petrus, tamen, super quem ædificata ab eodem Domino fuerat ecclesia." See also the same epistle, pp. 182, 183, and many other passages.

[3] Thus Cyprian in his letter to Quintus (Epist. lxxi., p. 273) makes the following awkward attempt to get over the difficulty: "Nam nec Petrus, *quem primum Dominus elegit, et super quem ædificavit ecclesiam suam* cum secum Paulus de circumcisione postmodum disceptaret, vindicavit sibi aliquid insolenter aut arroganter assumpsit, *ut diceret se primatum tenere et obtemperari a novellis et posteris sibi potius oportere.*"

prelate was left at liberty, at another more favorable opportunity, to wrest the Scriptures to the destruction of the Church.

From the middle of the third century, the authority of the Roman bishops advanced apace. The magnanimity with which so many of them then encountered martyrdom elicited general admiration; and the divisions caused by the schism of Novatian supplied them with a specious apology for enlarging their jurisdiction. The argument from the necessity of unity, urged so successfully for the creation of a bishop upwards of a hundred years before, could now be adduced with equal plausibility for the erection of a metropolitan; and, from this date, these prelates exercised archiepiscopal power. Seventy years afterward, or at the Council of Nice,[1] the ecclesiastical rule of the Primate of Rome was recognized by the bishops of the ten suburbicarian provinces, including no small portion of Italy.[2]

For the last forty years of the third century the Church was free from persecution, and, during this long period of repose, the great Western see enjoyed an unwonted measure of outward prosperity. Its religious services were conducted with increasing splendor, and distressed brethren in very distant countries shared the fruits of its munificence.[3] In the reign of Gallienus, when the Goths burst into the Empire and devastated Asia Minor, the bishop of Rome transmitted a large sum of money for the release of the Christians who had fallen into the hands of the barbarians.[4] A few years afterward, when Paul of Samosata was deposed for heresy, and when, on his refusal to surrender the property of the Church of Antioch, an application was made to the Emperor Aurelian for his interference, that prince submitted the matter in dispute to the decision of Dionysius of Rome and the other

[1] A.D. 325.

[2] The Suburbicarian Provinces comprehended the three islands of Sicily, Corsica, and Sardinia, and the whole of the southern part of Italy, including Naples and nearly all the territory now belonging to Tuscany and the States of the Church. See Bingham, iii. p. 20.

[3] In A.D. 254, the bishop of Rome sent assistance to Christians in Syria and Arabia. See Euseb. vii. 5.

[4] Basil, Ep. 220.

bishops of Italy.[1] This reference, in which the position of the Roman prelate was publicly recognized, perhaps for the first time, by a Roman Emperor, added vastly to the importance of the metropolitan see in public estimation. Christianity in the following century became the religion of the State, and the bishop of the chief city was thus prepared for the high position to which he was suddenly promoted.

None of the early bishops of Rome were distinguished for their mental accomplishments; and though they are commonly reputed the founders of the Latin Church, it is well known that, for nearly two hundred years, they all wrote and spoke the Greek language. The name *Pope*, which they have since appropriated, was originally common to all pastors.[2] For the first three centuries almost every question relating to them is involved in much mystery; and, as we approach the close of this period, the difficulty of unravelling their perplexed traditions rather increases than diminishes. Even the existence of some who are said to have now flourished has been considered doubtful.[3] It is alleged that the see was vacant for upwards of three years and a half during the Diocletian persecution in the beginning of the fourth century;[4] but even this point has not been very clearly ascertained. The Roman bishopric was by far the most important in the Church; and the obscurity which overhangs its early history can not but be embarrassing to those who seek to establish a title to the ministry by attempting to trace it up through such dark annals.

On looking back over the first three centuries, we may remark how much the chairman of the Roman eldership, at the time of the death of the Apostle John, differed from the prel-

[1] Euseb. vii. 50.

[2] Thus we read of "the blessed Pope Cyprian," bishop of Carthage. Cyprian, Epist. ii., p. 25. The name was sometimes given to the head of a monastery. In the Catacombs there was found an inscription probably to the memory of a Pope of this description. See Maitland, p. 185. See also Routh's "Reliquiæ," iii. pp. 256, 265.

[3] See Bower, "Marcellus," 29th Bishop.

[4] That is, from the autumn of A.D. 304 to the spring of A.D. 308. See Burton's "Lectures on the Ecc. Hist. of the First Three Cent." ii. p. 433.

ate who filled his place two hundred years afterward. The former was the servant of the presbyters, and appointed to carry out their decisions; the latter was their master, and entitled to require their submission. The former presided over the ministers of, perhaps, three or four comparatively poor congregations dispirited by recent persecution; the latter had the charge of at least five-and-twenty flourishing city churches,[1] together with all the bishops in all the surrounding territory. In eventful times an individual of transcendent talent, such as Pepin or Napoleon, has adroitly vaulted into a throne; but the bishop of Rome was indebted for his gradual elevation and his ultimate ascendency neither to extraordinary genius nor superior erudition, but to a combination of circumstances of unprecedented rarity. His position furnished him with peculiar facilities for acquiring influence. Whilst the city in which he was located was the largest in the world, it was also the most opulent and the most powerful. He was continually coming in contact with men of note in the Church from all parts of the Empire; and he had frequent opportunities of obliging these strangers by various offices of kindness. He thus, too, possessed means of ascertaining the state of the Christian interest in every land, and of diffusing his own sentiments under singularly propitious circumstances. When he was fast rising into power, it was alleged that he was constituted chief pastor of the Church by Christ himself; and a text of Scripture was quoted which was supposed to endorse his title. For a time no one cared to challenge its application; for meanwhile his precedence was but nominal, and those who were competent to point out the delusion, had no wish to give offence, by attacking the fond conceit of a friendly and prosperous prelate. But when the scene changed,

[1] In the life of Marcellus we read of so many places of worship in Rome. See "Hist. Platinæ De Vitis Pontif. Roman." p. 40, Coloniæ, 1593. Optatus speaks of forty churches in Rome at this time; but he is probably mistaken as to the date. There may have been so many after the establishment of Christianity by Constantine. There were only fifty churches in the Western capital in the beginning of the fifth century. See Neander, i. 276; edit. Edinburgh, 1847.

and when the Empire found another capital, the acumen of the bishop of the rival metropolis soon discovered a sounder exposition; and Chrysostom of Constantinople, at once the greatest preacher and the best commentator of antiquity, ignored the folly of Tertullian and of Cyprian. "Upon the rock," says he, "that is, upon the faith of the apostle's confession,"[1] the Church is built. "Christ said that He would build His Church on Peter's confession."[2] Soon afterward, the greatest divine connected with the Western Church, and the most profound theologian among the fathers, pointed out, still more distinctly, the true meaning of the passage. "Our Lord declares," says Augustine, "On this rock I will found my Church, because Peter had said: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. On *this rock which thou hast confessed*, He declares I will build my Church, for Christ was the rock on whose foundation Peter himself was built; for other foundation hath no man laid than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus."[3] In the Italian capital, the words on which the power of the Papacy is understood to rest are exhibited in gigantic letters within the dome of St. Peter's; but their exhibition only proves that the Church of Rome has lost the key of knowledge; for, though she would fain appeal to Scripture, she shows that she does not understand the meaning of its testimony; and, closing her eyes against the light supplied by the best and wisest of the fathers, she persists in adhering to a false interpretation.

[1] In Matt. xvi. 18. Opera, tom. ii., p. 344; edit. Eton, 1612.

[2] In John i. 50. Opera, tom. ii., p. 637; edit. Eton, 1612.

[3] "In Johann. Evang. Tractat." 124, § 5. Opera, tom. ix., c. 572. Augustine had before held the more fashionable view. See "Barrow on the Pope's Supremacy," by Dr. M'Crie, p. 78.

SECTION II.

THE LITERATURE AND THEOLOGY OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL WRITERS.

By "the Fathers" we understand the writers of the ancient Christian Church. The name is, however, of rather vague application; for, though generally employed to designate only the ecclesiastical authors of the first six centuries, it is extended occasionally to distinguished theologians who flourished in the middle ages.[1]

The fathers of the second and third centuries have a strong claim on our attention. Living on the verge of apostolic times, they were acquainted with the state of the Church when it had recently passed from under the care of its inspired founders; and, as witnesses to its early traditions, their testimony is of peculiar value. But the period before us produced comparatively few authors, and a considerable portion of its literature has perished. There are modern divines, such as Calvin and Baxter, who have each left behind a more voluminous array of publications than survives from all the fathers of these two hundred years. Origen was by far the most prolific of the writers who flourished during this interval, but the greater number of his productions have been lost; and yet those which remain, if translated into English, would amount to nearly triple the bulk of our authorized version of the

[1] Roman Catholic writers include authors who lived as late as the thirteenth century under the designation.

Bible. His extant works are, however, more extensive than all the other memorials of this most interesting section of the history of the Church.

Among the earliest ecclesiastical writers after the close of the first century is Polycarp of Smyrna. He is said to have been a disciple of the Apostle John, and hence he is known as one of the *Apostolic Fathers*.[1] An epistle of his addressed to the Philippians, and designed to correct certain vices and errors which had been making their appearance, is still preserved. It was written toward the middle of the second century;[2] its style is simple; and its general tone worthy of a man who had enjoyed apostolic tuition. Its venerable author suffered martyrdom about A.D. 155,[3] at the advanced age of eighty-six.[4]

Justin Martyr was contemporary with Polycarp. He was a native of Samaria, and a Gentile by birth; he had travelled much; he possessed a well-cultivated mind; and he had made himself acquainted with the various systems of philosophy which were then current. He could derive no satisfaction from the wisdom of the pagan theorists; but, one day, as he walked, somewhat sad and pensive, near the sea-shore, a casual meeting with an aged stranger led him to turn his thoughts to the Christian revelation. The individual with whom he had this solitary and important interview, was a member and, perhaps, a minister of the Church. After pointing out to Justin the folly of mere theorizing, and recommending him to study the Old Testament Scriptures, as well on account of their great antiquity as their intrinsic worth, he proceeded to

[1] The references in this work to the Apostolic Fathers by Cotelerius are to the Amsterdam Edition, folio, 1724.

[2] This is the date assigned to it by Bunsen. "Hippolytus," i. 309. It is not probable that Polycarp was at the head of the eldership of Smyrna much earlier. See Period iii., sec. iii., chap. v., note.

[3] According to Ussher iii., A.D. 169.

[4] See Pearson's "Minor Works," ii. 531. The date A.D. 167 is given in the Chronicon of Eusebius; but recent investigations have shown that the correct chronology is A.D. 155. See Bishop Lightfoot in the *Contemporary Review* for May, 1875, p. 838.

expatiate on the nature and excellence of the Gospel.[1] The impression made upon the mind of the young student was never afterward effaced; he became a decided Christian; and finished his career by martyrdom.

Justin is the first writer whose contributions to ecclesiastical literature are of considerable extent. Some of the works ascribed to him are the productions of others; but there is no reason to question the genuineness of his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, and of the two Apologies addressed to the Emperors.[2] Though the meeting with Trypho is said to have occurred at Ephesus, it is now, perhaps, impossible to determine whether it ever actually took place, or whether the Dialogue is only the report of an imaginary discussion. It serves, however, to illustrate the mode of argument then adopted in the controversy between the Jews and the disciples, and throws much light on the state of Christian theology. Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius were, probably, the Emperors to whom the Apologies are addressed. In these appeals to imperial justice the calumnies against the Christians are refuted, whilst the simplicity of their worship and the purity of their morality are impressively described.

Justin, even after his conversion, still wore the philosopher's cloak, and continued to cherish an undue regard for the wisdom of the pagan sages. His mind never was completely emancipated from the influence of a system of false metaphysics; and thus it was that, whilst his views of various doctrines of the Gospel remained confused, his allusions to them are equivocal, if not contradictory. But it has been well remarked that *conscience*, rather than *science*, guided many of the fathers; and the case of Justin demonstrates the truth of the observation. He possessed an extensive knowledge of the Scriptures; and though his theological views were not so exact or so perspicuous as they might have been, had he been trained up from infancy in the Christian faith, or had he studied the controversies which subsequently arose, his creed

[1] The original narrative may be found in the Dialogue with Trypho.

[2] The references to Justin in this work are to the Paris folio edition of 1615.

was substantially evangelical. He had received the truth "in the love of it," and he counted not his life dear in the service of his Divine Master.

The *Epistle to Diognetus*, frequently included among the works of Justin, is the production of an earlier writer. Its author, who styles himself "a disciple of apostles," designed by it to promote the conversion of a friend; his own views of divine truth are comparatively correct and clear; and in no uninspired memorial of antiquity are the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel exhibited with greater propriety and beauty. Appended also to the common editions of the works of Justin are the remains of a few somewhat later writers, namely, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Hermas. Tatian was a disciple of Justin;[1] Athenagoras was a learned man of Athens; Theophilus is said to have been one of the pastors of Antioch; and of Hermas nothing whatever is known. The tracts of these authors relate almost entirely to the controversy between Christianity and Paganism. Whilst they point out the folly and falsehood of the accusations so frequently preferred against the brethren, they press the Gospel on the acceptance of the Gentiles with much earnestness, and support its claims by a great variety of arguments.

The tract known as the *Epistle of Barnabas*, was composed in A.D. 135.[2] It is the production of a convert from Judaism who took special pleasure in allegorical interpretations of Scripture. Hermas, the author of the little work called *Pastor* or The Shepherd, is a writer of much the same character. He was the brother of Pius,[3] who flourished about the middle

[1] He afterward became the founder of a sect noted for its austere discipline. His followers used water, instead of wine, at the celebration of the Lord's Supper. They lived in celibacy, and observed rigorous fasts.

[2] The writer says of the temple (chap. xvi.), "It is now destroyed by their (the Jews) enemies, and *the servants of their enemies are building it up.*" Jerusalem was rebuilt by Hadrian about A.D. 135, and the name Ælia given to it.

[3] Two short letters ascribed to Pius are mentioned Period ii., sec. iii., chap. vii. For a long time Barnabas, the author of the epistle, was absurdly confounded with the companion of Paul mentioned Acts xiii. 1, and elsewhere; and Hermas was supposed to be the individual saluted in Rom. xvi.

of the second century, and who was, perhaps, the first or second individual who was officially designated *Bishop* of Rome. The writings of Papias, pastor of Hierapolis in the time of Polycarp, are no longer extant.[1] The works of Hegesippus, of a somewhat later date, and treating of the subject of ecclesiastical history, have also disappeared.[2]

Irenæus of Lyons is the next writer who claims our special notice. He was originally connected with Asia Minor; and in his youth he is said to have enjoyed the tuition of Polycarp of Smyrna. We can not tell when he left his native country, or what circumstances led him to settle on the banks of the Rhone; but we know that, toward the termination of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, he was appointed by the Gallic Christians to visit the Roman Church on a mission of importance. The Celtic language, still preserved in the Gaelic, or Irish, was then spoken in France,[3] and Irenæus found it necessary to qualify himself for the duties of a preacher among the heathen by studying the barbarous dialect. His zeal, energy, and talent were duly appreciated; soon after the death of the aged Pothinus he became the chief pastor of Lyons; and for many years he exercised considerable influence throughout the whole of the Western Church. When the Paschal controversy created such excitement, and when Victor of Rome threatened to rend the Christian commonwealth by his impetuous and haughty bearing, Irenæus interposed, and, to some extent, succeeded in moderating the violence of the

14. Hence these two writers have been called, like Polycarp and others, *Apostolic Fathers*. As to the date of the Pastor of Hermas, see Hefele's "Christian Councils," by Clark, p. 79.

[1] Eusebius, who has preserved a few fragments of this author, describes him as a very credulous person. See his "Hist." iii. 39.

[2] In the text it has not been considered necessary to mention all the writers, however small their contributions to our ecclesiastical literature, who lived during the second and third centuries. Hence, Melito of Sardis, Caius of Rome, and many others, are unnoticed. The remaining fragments of these early ecclesiastical writers may be found in Routh's "Reliquiæ," and elsewhere.

[3] ἡμῶν, τῶν ἐν Κελτοῖς διατριβόντων καὶ περὶ βάρβαρον διαλεκτον τὸ πλεῖστον ἀσχολουμένων.—*Contra Hæreses*, lib. i. Præf.

Italian prelate. He was the author of several works,[1] but his only extant production is a treatise "Against Heresies." It is divided into five books, four of which exist only in a Latin version;[2] and it contains a lengthened refutation of the Valentinians and other Gnostics.

Irenæus is commonly called the disciple of Polycarp; but he was also under the tuition of a less intelligent preceptor, Papias of Hierapolis.[3] This teacher, who has been already mentioned, and who was the author of a work now lost, entitled "The Explanations of the Discourses of the Lord," is noted as the earliest ecclesiastical writer who held the doctrine of the personal reign of Christ at Jerusalem during the millennium. "These views," says Eusebius, "he appears to have adopted in consequence of having misunderstood the apostolic narratives. . . . . For he was a man of very slender intellect, as is evident from his discourses."[4] His pupil, Irenæus, possessed a much superior capacity; but even his writings are not destitute of puerilities; and he derived some of the errors to be found in them from his weak-minded teacher.[5]

Irenæus died about the beginning of the third century; and, shortly before that date, by far the most vigorous and acute writer who had yet appeared among the fathers, began to attract attention. This was the celebrated TERTULLIAN. He was originally a heathen,[6] and he seems in early life to have been engaged in the profession of a lawyer. At that time, as afterward, there was constant intercourse between Rome and Carthage;[7] Tertullian was well acquainted with both these great

[1] The references to Irenæus in this work are to Stieren's edition of 1853.

[2] Wordsworth has remarked that in the "Philosophumena" of Hippolytus we have some of the lost text of Irenæus. St. Hippolytus, p. 15.

[3] Such is the testimony of Jerome. See Cave's "Life of Irenæus."

[4] Euseb. "Hist." iii. 39.

[5] Irenæus adopted the millenarianism of Papias. See Euseb. iii. 39.

[6] This is evident from his own statements. See his "Apology," c. 18, and "De Spectaculis," c. 19. The references to Tertullian in this work are either to the edition of Oehler of 1853, or to that of Rigaltius of 1675.

[7] According to some, the population of Carthage at this time amounted to hundreds of thousands. "The intercourse between Carthage and Rome, on account of the corn trade alone, was probably more regular and rapid

cities; and he had resided several years in the capital of the Empire.[1] But most of his public life was spent in Carthage, the place of his birth. In the beginning of the third century clerical celibacy was beginning to be fashionable; and yet Tertullian, though a presbyter,[2] was married, for two of his tracts are addressed *To his Wife;* and his works attest that then no law of the Church prohibited ecclesiastics from entering into wedlock.

The extant productions of this writer are numerous. Of some pieces, the most accomplished scholars have found it difficult to furnish at once a literal and an intelligible version.[3] His style is harsh, his transitions are abrupt, and his innuendoes and allusions most perplexing. He was a man of very bilious temperament, who could scarcely distinguish a theological opponent from a personal enemy; for he pours forth on those who differ from him whole torrents of sarcasm and invective.[4] His strong passion, acting on a fervid imagination, completely overpowered his judgment; and hence he deals so largely in exaggeration that, as to many matters of fact, we can not safely depend upon his testimony. His tone is dictatorial and dogmatic; and, though we can not doubt his piety, we feel that his spirit is somewhat repulsive and ungenial. Whilst he was sadly deficient in sagacity, he was very much the creature of impulse; and thus it was that he was so

than with any other part of the Empire."—*Milman's Latin Christianity*, i. p. 47.

[1] See Euseb. ii. 2, 25.

[2] Such is the testimony of Jerome, who asserts farther that the treatment he received from the clergy of Rome induced him to leave that city.

[3] Such as the tracts "De Pallio" and "De Jejuniis." Since the appearance of the 1st edition of this work, a translation of the works of Tertullian has been published among the Ante-Nicene fathers by the Messrs. Clark, Edinburgh.

[4] As a choice specimen of his vituperative ability his denunciation of Marcion may be quoted: "Sed nihil tam barbarum ac triste apud Pontum quam quod illic Marcion natus est, Scytha tetrior, Hamaxobio instabilior, Massageta inhumanior, Amazona audacior, nubilo obscurior, hieme frigidior, gelu fragilior, Istro fallacior, Caucaso abruptior."—*Adversus Marcionem*, lib. i., c. 1.

superstitious, so bigoted, and so choleric. But he was, beyond question, possessed of erudition and of genius; and when he advocates a right principle, he can expound, defend, and illustrate it with great ability and eloquence.

Tertullian is commonly known as the earliest of the Latin fathers.[1] The writer who first attempted to supply the rulers of the world with a Christian literature in their own tongue encountered a task of much difficulty. It was no easy matter to conduct theological controversies in a language which was not remarkable for flexibility, and which had never before been employed in such discussions; and Tertullian often found it necessary to coin unwonted forms of expression, or rather to invent an ecclesiastical nomenclature. The ponderous Latin, hitherto accustomed to speak only of Jupiter and the gods, engages somewhat awkwardly in its new vocation; and yet contrives to proclaim, with wonderful power, the great thoughts for which it now finds utterance. Several years after his appearance as an author, Tertullian lapsed into Montanism—a species of heresy peculiarly attractive to a man of his rugged and austere character. Some of his works bear clear traces of this change of sentiment; but others furnish no internal evidences warranting us to pronounce decisively respecting the date of their composition. Though he identified himself with a party under the ban of ecclesiastical proscription, his works still continued to be held in high repute, and to be perused with avidity by those who valued themselves on their zeal for orthodoxy. It is recorded of one of the most influential of the Catholic bishops of the third century that he read a portion of them daily; and, when calling for his favorite author, he is reported to have said, "Give me *the Master*."[2]

Tertullian flourished at a period when ecclesiastical usurpation was beginning to produce some of its bitter fruits, and when religion was rapidly degenerating from its primitive puri-

[1] Victor of Rome, who was contemporary with Tertullian, is said to have written in Latin, but the extant letters ascribed to him are spurious.

[2] Such, according to Jerome, was the practice of Cyprian.

ty.[1] His works, which treat of a great variety of topics interesting to the Christian student, throw immense light on the state of the Church in his generation. His best known production is his *Apology*, in which he pleads the cause of the persecuted disciples with consummate talent, and urges upon the State the equity and the wisdom of toleration. He expounds the doctrine of the Trinity more lucidly than any preceding writer; he treats of Prayer, of Repentance, and of Baptism; he takes up the controversy with the Jews;[2] and he assails the Valentinians and other heretics. But the way of salvation by faith was very indistinctly apprehended by him, so that he can not be safely trusted as a theologian. He had evidently no clear conception of the place which works ought to occupy according to the scheme of the Gospel; and hence he sometimes speaks as if pardon could be purchased by penance, by fasting, or by martyrdom.

Clement of Alexandria was contemporary with Tertullian. Like him, he was a Gentile by birth; but we know nothing of the circumstances connected with his conversion. In early times Alexandria was one of the great marts of literature and science; its citizens were noted for their intellectual culture; and, when a Church was formed there, learned men began to pass over to the new religion in considerable numbers. It was, in consequence, deemed expedient to establish an institute where catechumens of this class, before admission to baptism, could be instructed in the faith by some well-qualified teacher. The plan of the seminary was gradually enlarged; and it soon supplied education to candidates for the ministry. Toward the close of the second century, Pantænus, a distinguished scholar, had the charge of it: and Clement, who had been his pupil,[3] became his successor as its president. Some

[1] He died at an advanced age, but the date of his demise can not be accurately determined. Most of his works were written between A.D. 194 and A.D. 217.

[2] The part of the work "Adversus Judæos," from the beginning of the ninth chapter, is taken chiefly from the third book of the Treatise against Marcion, and has been added by another hand.

[3] Euseb. v. 11.

of the works of this writer have perished, and his only extant productions are a discourse entitled "What rich man shall be saved?" his Address to the Greeks or Gentiles, his Pædagogue, and his Stromata. The hortatory Address is designed to win over the pagans from idolatry; the Pædagogue directs to Jesus, or the Word, as the great Teacher, and supplies converts with practical precepts for their guidance; whilst, in the Stromata, or Miscellanies, we have a description of what he calls the Gnostic or perfect Christian. He here takes occasion to attack those who, in his estimation, were improperly designated Gnostics, such as Basilides, Valentine, Marcion, and others.

Clement, as is evident from his writings, was extensively acquainted with profane literature. But he formed quite too high an estimate of the value of the heathen philosophy, and allegorized Scripture in a way as dangerous as it was absurd. By the serpent which deceived Eve, according to Clement, "*pleasure*, an earthly vice which creeps upon the belly, is allegorically represented."[1] Moses, speaking allegorically, if we may believe this writer, called the Divine Wisdom *the tree of life* planted in paradise; by which paradise we may understand the world, in which all the works of creation were called into being.[2] He even interprets the ten commandments allegorically. Thus, by *adultery* he understands a departure from the true knowledge of the Most High; and by *murder*, a violation of the truth respecting God and His eternal existence.[3] It is easy to see how Scripture, by such a system of interpretation, might be tortured into a witness for any extravagance.

In the early part of the third century *Hippolytus* of Portus exerted much influence by his writings. It was long believed that, with the exception of some fragments and a few tracts of little consequence, the works of this father had ceased to exist; but, as stated in a preceding chapter,[4] one of his most

[1] "Admonitio ad Gentes," Opera, p. 69. Edit. Coloniæ, 1688.

[2] "Stromata," book v.

[3] See Kaye's "Clement of Alexandria," p. 378.

[4] Period ii., sec. i., chap. v., p. 313.

important publications, the "Philosophumena, or Refutation of all Heresies," has been recently recovered. The reappearance of this production after so many centuries of oblivion is an extraordinary fact; and its testimony relative to historical transactions of deep interest connected with the early Church of Rome, has created quite a sensation among the students of ecclesiastical literature.

Hippolytus was the disciple of Irenæus, and one of the soundest theologians of his generation. His works, which are written in Greek, illustrate his learning, his acuteness, and his eloquence. His views on some matters of ecclesiastical discipline were, indeed, too rigid; and, by a writer of the fifth century,[1] he has been described as an abettor of Novatianism; but his zeal and piety are universally admitted. He lost his life in the cause of Christianity; and though he attests the heretical teaching of two of her chief pastors, the Church of Rome still honors him as a saint and a martyr.

Minucius Felix was the contemporary of Hippolytus. He was a Roman lawyer, and a convert from paganism. In his Dialogue entitled "Octavius," the respective merits of Christianity and heathenism are discussed with much vivacity. In point of style this little work is surpassed by none of the ecclesiastical writings of the period.

Another and a still more distinguished author, contemporary with Hippolytus, was ORIGEN. He was born at Alexandria about A.D. 185; his father, Leonides, who was a teacher of rhetoric, was a member of the Church; and his son enjoyed the advantages of an excellent elementary education. Origen, when very young, was required daily to commit prescribed portions of the Word of God to memory; and the child soon became intensely interested in the study of the sacred oracles. The questions which he proposed to his father, as he repeated his appointed tasks, displayed singular precocity of intellect; and Leonides rejoiced exceedingly as he observed from time to time the growing indications of his extraordinary genius. But before Origen reached maturity, his good parent fell a victim to the intolerance of the imperial laws. In the perse-

[1] Prudentius. See Wordsworth's "Hippolytus," pp. 105–112.

cution under Septimius Severus, when the young scholar was about seventeen years of age, Leonides was put into confinement, and then beheaded. He had a wife and seven children who were likely to be left destitute by his death; but Origen, his first-born, afraid lest his constancy should be overcome by the prospect of a beggared family, wrote a letter to him when he was in prison to encourage him to martyrdom. "Stand steadfast, father," said the ardent youth, "and take care not to desert your principles on our account." At this crisis he would have exposed himself to martyrdom had not his mother hid his clothes, and thus prevented him from appearing in public.

When Leonides was put to death his property was confiscated, and his family reduced to poverty. But Origen attracted the notice of a rich and noble lady of Alexandria, who received him into her house and became his patron. He did not, however, remain long under her roof, as he was soon able to earn a maintenance by teaching. He continued, meanwhile, to apply himself with amazing industry to the acquisition of knowledge; and at length he began to be regarded as one of the most learned of the Christians. So great was his celebrity as a divine that, more than once during his life, whole synods of foreign bishops solicited his advice and interference in the settlement of theological controversies.

Whilst Origen, by intense study, was constantly adding to his intellectual treasures, he also improved his mind by travelling. When twenty-six years of age he made a journey to Rome; and he subsequently visited Arabia, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece. As he passed through Palestine in A.D. 228, when he was in the forty-third year of his age, he was ordained a presbyter by some of the bishops of that country. He was now teacher of the catechetical school of Alexandria—an office in which he had succeeded Clement—and his ordination by the foreign pastors gave great offence to Demetrius, his own bishop. This haughty churchman was galled by the superior reputation of the great scholar; and Origen, on his return to Egypt, was exposed to an ecclesiastical persecution. An indiscreet act of his youth was converted into

a formidable accusation,[1] whilst some incautious speculations in which he had indulged were urged as evidences of his unsoundness in the faith. His ordination was pronounced invalid; he was deprived of his appointment as president of the catechetical school, and excommunicated as a heretic. He now retired to Cæsarea, where he spent the greater portion of the remainder of his life. The sentence of excommunication was announced by Demetrius to the Churches abroad; but, though it was approved at Rome and elsewhere, it was not recognized in Palestine, Phœnice, Arabia, and Achaia. At Cæsarea, Origen established a theological seminary such as that over which he had so long presided at Alexandria; and in this institute some of the most eminent pastors of the third century received their education.

This great man throughout life practiced extraordinary self-denial. His clothing was scarcely sufficient to protect him from the cold; he slept on the ground; he confined himself to the simplest fare; and for years he persisted in going barefoot.[2] But his austerities did not prevent him from acquiring a world-wide reputation. Pagan philosophers attended his lectures, and persons of the highest distinction sought his society. When Julia Mammæa, the mother of Alexander Severus, invited him to visit her, and when, in compliance with this summons, he proceeded to Antioch,[3] escorted by a military guard, he was an object of no little curiosity to the imperial courtiers. It could no longer be said that the Christians were an illiterate generation; as, in all that brilliant throng surrounding the throne of the Master of the Roman world, there was not, perhaps, one to be compared with the poor catechist of Alexandria for varied and profound scholarship. But his theological taste was sadly vitiated by his study of the pagan philosophy. Clement, his early instructor, led him to entertain far too high an opinion of its excellence; and a subsequent teacher, Ammonius Saccas, the father of New Platonism, thoroughly imbued his mind with many of his own dangerous

[1] He had acted literally as described, Matt. xix. 12.

[2] Euseb. vi. 3.

[3] Euseb. vi. 21.

principles. According to Ammonius all systems of religion and philosophy contain the elements of truth; and it is the duty of the wise man to trace out and exhibit their harmony. The doctrines of Plato formed the basis of his creed, and it required no little ingenuity to show how all other theories quadrated with the speculations of the Athenian sage. To establish his views, he was obliged to draw much on his imagination, and to adopt modes of exegesis the most extravagant and unwarrantable. The philosophy of Ammonius exerted a very pernicious influence on Origen, and seduced him into not a few of those errors which have contributed so greatly to lower his repute as a theologian.

Origen was a most prolific author; and, if all his works were still extant, they would be far more voluminous than those of any other of the fathers. But most of his writings have been lost; and, in not a few instances, those which remain have reached us either in a very mutilated form, or in a garbled Latin version. His treatise "Against Celsus," which was composed when he was advanced in life,[1] and which is by far the most valuable of his existing works, has come down to us in a more perfect state than any of his other productions. It is a defence of Christianity in reply to the publication of a witty heathen philosopher who wrote against it in the time of the Antonines.[2] Of his celebrated "Hexapla," to which he devoted much of his time for eight and twenty years, only some fragments have been preserved. This great work was undertaken to meet the cavils of the Jews against the Septuagint—the Greek translation of the Old Testament in current use in the days of the apostles, and still most appreciated by the Christians. The unbelieving Israelites pronounced it a corrupt version; and, that all might have an opportunity of judging for themselves, Origen exhibited the text in six consecutive columns—the first, containing the original Hebrew—the second, the same in Greek letters—and the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth, four

[1] Euseb. vi. 36.

[2] He says Celsus lived in the reign of Hadrian and afterward. "Contra Celsum," i. § 8; Opera, tom i., p. 327. The references to Origen in this work are to the edition of the Benedictine Delarue, 4 vols. folio. Paris, 1733–59.

of the most famous of the Greek translations, including the Septuagint.[1] The labor employed in the collation of manuscripts, when preparing this work, was truly prodigious. The expense, which must also have been great, was defrayed by Ambrosius, a wealthy Christian friend, who placed at the disposal of the editor the constant services of seven amanuenses. By his "Hexapla" Origen did much to preserve the purity of the sacred text, and laid the foundations of the science of Scripture criticism.

This learned writer can not be trusted as an interpreter of the inspired oracles. Like the Jewish Cabalists, of whom Philo, whose works he had diligently studied,[2] is a remarkable specimen, he neglects the literal sense of the Word, and betakes himself to mystical expositions.[3] In this way the divine record can be made to support any crotchet which happens to please the fancy of the commentator. Origen may, in fact, be regarded as the father of Christian mysticism; and in after-ages, to a certain class of visionaries, especially among the monks, his writings long continued to present peculiar attractions.

On doctrinal points his statements are not always consistent, so that it is extremely difficult to form anything like a correct idea of his theological sentiments. Thus, on the subject of the Trinity, he sometimes speaks most distinctly in the language of orthodoxy, whilst again he employs phraseology which rather savors of the creed of Sabellius or of Arius. In his attempts to reconcile the Gospel and his philosophy, he miserably compromised some of the most important truths of Scripture. The fall of man seems to be not unfrequently repudiated in his religious system; and yet, occasionally, it is distinctly recognized.[4] He maintained the pre-existence of human souls;

[1] The three other Greek versions were those of Aquila, of Symmachus, and of Theodotian.

[2] Origen, in his writings, repeatedly refers to Philo by name. See Opera, i. 543.

[3] See Euseb. ii., c. 17.

[4] Thus he declares, "The prophets indicating what is wise concerning the circumstances of our generation, say that sacrifice is offered for sin, *even the sin of those newly born* as not free from sin, for it is written, 'I was shapen

he held that the stars are animated beings; that all men shall ultimately attain happiness; and that the devils themselves shall eventually be saved.[1]

It is abundantly clear that Origen was a man of true piety. His whole life illustrates his self-denial, his single-mindedness, his delight in the Word of God, and his zeal for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. In the Decian persecution he suffered nobly as a confessor; and the torture which he then endured hastened his demise. But with all his learning he was deficient in practical sagacity; and, though both his genius and his eloquence were of a high order, he possessed scarcely even an average share of prudence and common sense. His writings diffused, not the genial light of the Sun of Righteousness, but the mist and darkness of a Platonized Christianity. Though he induced many philosophers to become members of the Church, the value of these accessions was greatly deteriorated by the daring spirit of speculation which they were encouraged to cultivate. His Christian courage, his industry, and his invincible perseverance, challenge our highest admiration. He closed a most laborious career at Tyre, A.D. 254, in the seventieth year of his age.

About the time of the death of Origen, a Latin author, whose writings are still perused with interest, was beginning to attract much notice. CYPRIAN of Carthage, before his conversion to Christianity, was a professor of rhetoric and a gentleman of property. When he renounced heathenism, he had reached the mature age of forty-five or forty-six; and as he possessed rank, talent, and popular eloquence, he was deemed no ordinary acquisition to the Church.[2] About two years after

in wickedness, and in sin did my mother conceive me.' "—*Contra Celsum*, vii. § 50.

[1] He held, however, that Satan is to be excepted from the general salvation. See "Epist. ad Amicos Alexandrinos," Opera i., p. 5.

[2] Mr. Cooper, in his "Free Church of Ancient Christendom," p. 403, has adduced a variety of arguments to show that Cæcilius, the spiritual father of Cyprian, is the author of the "Recognitions of Clement," a spurious production which was fabricated in the early part of the third century. The evidence is very striking; and the fact, if admitted, will serve to account for the rapid spread of hierarchical principles about this period.

his baptism, the chief pastor of the metropolis of the Proconsular Africa was removed by death; and Cyprian, by the acclamations of the Christian people, was called to the vacant office. At that time there were only eight presbyters,[1] or elders, connected with the bishopric of Carthage; but the city contained some hundreds of thousands of a population; and, though the episcopal dignity was not without its perils, it did not want the attractions of wealth and influence. The advancement of Cyprian gave great offence to the other elders, who conceived that one of themselves, on the ground of greater experience and more lengthened services, had a better title to promotion. Though the new bishop was sustained by the enthusiastic support of the multitude, the presbytery contrived, notwithstanding, to give him considerable annoyance. Five of them, constituting a majority, formed themselves into a regular opposition; and for several years the Carthaginian Church was distracted by the struggles between the bishop and his presbytery.

The pastorate of Cyprian extended over a period of ten years; but meanwhile persecution raged, and the bishop was obliged to spend nearly the one-third of his episcopal life in retirement and in exile. From his retreat he kept up a communication by letters with his flock.[2] The worship and constitution of the Church in the middle of the third century may be ascertained pretty clearly from the Cyprianic correspond-

[1] See Sage's "Vindication of the Principles of the Cyprianic Age," p. 348. London, 1701.

[2] In the case of these epistles much confusion arises, in the way of reference, from their various arrangement by different editors. The references in this work to Cyprian are to the edition of Baluzius, folio, Venice, 1728. Baluzius, in the arrangement of the letters, adopts the same order as Pamelius, but Epistle II. of the latter is Epistle I. of the former, and so on to Epistle XXIII. of Pamelius, which is Epistle XXII. of the other. Baluzius here conforms exactly to the numeration of the preceding editor by making Epistle XXIV. immediately follow Epistle XXII., so that from this to the end of the series the same references apply equally well to the work of either. The numeration of the Oxford edition of Bishop Fell is, with a few exceptions, quite different. The "Instructions" of Commodian, a poor Christian poet of Africa who flourished in the third century, are sometimes found appended to Cyprian's works.

ence. Some of the letters addressed to the Carthaginian bishop, as well as those dictated by him, are still extant; and as he maintained an epistolary intercourse with Rome, Cappadocia, and other places, the documents known as the Cyprianic writings [1] are among the most important of the ancient ecclesiastical memorials. This eminent pastor has also left behind him several short treatises on topics which were then attracting public attention. Among these may be mentioned his tracts on "The Unity of the Church," "The Lord's Prayer," "The Vanity of Idols," "The Grace of God," "The Dress of Virgins," and "The Benefit of Patience."

The writings of Cyprian have long been noted for their orthodoxy; and yet it must be admitted that his hierarchical prejudices stunted his charity and obscured his intellectual vision. Tertullian was his favorite author; and he possessed much of the contracted spirit and stiff formalism of the great Carthaginian presbyter. He speaks in more exalted terms of the authority of bishops than any preceding writer. The attempts of his discontented presbyters to curb his power inflamed his old aristocratic hauteur, and thus led to a reaction; and supported by the popular voice, he was tempted absurdly to magnify his office, and to stretch his prerogative beyond the bounds of its legitimate exercise. His name carried with it great influence, and from his time episcopal pretensions advanced apace.

Cyprian was martyred about A.D. 258 in the Valerian persecution. As he was a man of rank, and personally related to some of the imperial officers at Carthage, he was treated, when a prisoner, with unusual respect and indulgence. On the evening before his death an elegant supper was provided for him, and he was permitted to enjoy the society of a numerous party of his friends. When he reached the spot where he suffered he was subjected to no lingering torments; for his head was severed from his body by a single stroke of the executioner.[2]

[1] Mr. Shepherd has completely failed in his attempt to disprove the genuineness of these writings. They are as well attested as any other documents of antiquity.

[2] See Period ii., sec. i., chap. ii., p. 274, note.

The only other writer of note who flourished after Cyprian, in the third century,[1] was *Gregory*, surnamed *Thaumaturgus*, or *The Wonder-Worker*. He belonged to a pagan family of distinction; and, when a youth, was intended for the profession of the law; but, becoming acquainted with Origen at Cæsarea in Palestine, he was induced to embrace the Christian faith, and relinquish flattering prospects of secular promotion. He became subsequently the bishop of Neo-Cæsarea in Pontus. When he entered on his charge he had a congregation of only seventeen individuals; but his ministry was singularly successful; for, according to tradition, all the inhabitants of the city, with seventeen exceptions, were, at the time of his death, members of the Church. The reports respecting him are exaggerated, and no credit can be attached to the narrative of his miracles.[2] He wrote several works, of which his "Panegyric on Origen," and his "Paraphrase on Ecclesiastes," are still extant. The genuineness of some other tracts ascribed to him may be fairly challenged.

The preceding account of the fathers of the second and third centuries may enable us to form some idea of the value of these writers as ecclesiastical authorities. Most of them had reached maturity before they embraced the faith of the Gospel, so that, with a few exceptions, they wanted the advantages of an early Christian education. Some of them, before their conversion, had bestowed much time and attention on the speculations of the pagan philosophers; and, after their reception into the bosom of the Church, they still continued to pursue the same unprofitable studies. Cyprian, one of the most eloquent of these fathers, had been baptized only about two years before he was elected bishop of Carthage; and, during his comparatively short episcopate, he was generally in a

[1] It has not been thought necessary in this chapter to notice either *Arnobius*, an African rhetorician, who wrote seven Books against the Gentiles; or the Christian Cicero, *Lactantius*, who is said to have been his pupil. Both these authors appeared about the end of the period embraced in this history, and consequently exerted little or no influence during the time of which it treats.

[2] His life was written by Gregory Nyssen a century after his death.

turmoil of excitement, and had, consequently, little leisure for reading or mental cultivation. Such a writer is not entitled to command confidence as an expositor of the faith once delivered to the saints. Even in our own day, with all the facilities supplied by printing for the rapid accumulation of knowledge, no one expects much spiritual instruction from an author who undertakes the office of an interpreter of Scripture two years after his conversion from heathenism. The fathers of the second and third centuries were not regarded as safe guides even by their Christian contemporaries. Tatian was the founder of a sect of extreme Teetotalers.[1] Tertullian, who, in point of learning, vigor, and genius, stands at the head of the Latin writers of this period, was connected with a party of gloomy fanatics. Origen, the most voluminous and erudite of the Greek fathers, was excommunicated as a heretic. If we estimate these authors, as they were appreciated by the early Church of Rome, we must pronounce their writings of little value. Tertullian, as a Montanist, was under the ban of the Roman bishop. Hippolytus could not have been a favorite with either Zephyrinus or Callistus, for he denounced both as heretics. Origen was treated by the Roman Church as a man under sentence of excommunication. Stephen deemed even Cyprian unworthy of his ecclesiastical fellowship, because the Carthaginian prelate maintained the propriety of rebaptizing heretics.

Nothing can be more unsatisfactory, or rather childish, than the explanations of Holy Writ sometimes given by these ancient expositors. According to Tertullian, the two sparrows mentioned in the New Testament[2] signify the soul and the body;[3] and Clemens Alexandrinus gravely pleads for marriage[4] from the promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."[5] Cyprian produces, as an argument in support of the doctrine of the Trinity, that the Jews observed "the third, sixth, and ninth hours" as their "fixed and lawful seasons for prayer."[6]

[1] See a preceding note in this chapter, p. 334. [2] Matt. x. 29.
[3] Scorpiace, c. ix. [4] Stromata, book iii. [5] Matt. xviii. 20.
[6] "For," says he, "from the first hour to the third, a trinity of number is

Origen represents the heavenly bodies as literally engaged in acts of devotion.[1] If these authorities are to be credited, the Gihon, one of the rivers of Paradise, was no other than the Nile.[2] Very few of the fathers of this period were acquainted with Hebrew, so that, as a class, they were miserably qualified for the interpretation of the Scriptures. Even Origen himself had a very imperfect knowledge of the language of the Old Testament.[3] In consequence of their literary deficiencies, the fathers of the second and third centuries occasionally commit the most ridiculous blunders. Thus, Irenæus tells us that the name *Jesus* in Hebrew consists of two letters and *a half*, and describes it as signifying "that Lord who contains heaven and earth."[4] This father asserts also that the Hebrew word *Adonai*, or the Lord, denotes "utterable and wonderful."[5] Clemens Alexandrinus is not more successful as an interpreter of the sacred tongue of the chosen people; for he asserts that Jacob was called *Israel* "because he had seen the Lord God,"[6] and he avers that *Abraham* means "the elect father of a sound"![7] Justin Martyr errs egregiously in his references to the Old Testament; as he cites Isaiah for Jeremiah,[8] Zechariah for Malachi,[9] Zephaniah for Zechariah,[10] and Jeremiah for Dan-

manifested; from the fourth on to the sixth, is another trinity; and in the seventh, closing with the ninth, a perfect trinity is numbered, in spaces of three hours."—*On the Lord's Prayer*, p. 426.

[1] "Contra Celsum," v. § 11.

[2] Theophilus to Autolycus, lib. ii., § 24.

[3] In proof of this see his treatise "Contra Celsum," i. 25, also "Opera," iii., p. 616, and iv., p. 86.

[4] "Contra Hæreses," ii., c. xxiv., § 2. See Matt. i. 21.

[5] "Contra Hæreses," ii., c. xxxv. 3. He seems to have confounded *Adonai* and *Yehovah*. The latter word was regarded by the Jews as the "unutterable" name. Hence it has been thought that in the Latin version of Irenæus we should read "innominabile" for "nominabile." See Stieren's "Irenæus," i. 418.

[6] "Pædagogue," book i. See Gen. xxxii. 28.

[7] "Stromata," book v. See Gen. xvii. 5. Not a few of these mistakes may be traced to Philo Judæus. Thus, this interpretation of Abraham is found in his "Questions and Solutions on Genesis," book iii. 43.

[8] "Apol.," ii., p. 88.

[9] "Dialogue with Tyrpho," Opera, p. 268.

[10] "Apol.," ii., p. 76.

iel.[1] Irenæus repeats, as an apostolic tradition, that when our Lord acted as a public teacher He was between forty and fifty years of age;[2] and Tertullian affirms that He was about thirty years of age at the time of His crucifixion.[3] The opinion of this same writer in reference to angels is still more extraordinary. He maintains that some of these beings, captivated by the beauty of the daughters of men, came down from heaven and married them; and that, out of complaisance to their brides, they communicated to them the arts of polishing and setting precious stones, of preparing cosmetics, and of using other appliances which minister to female vanity.[4] His ideas on topics of a different character are equally singular. Thus, he affirms that the soul is corporeal, having length, breadth, height, and figure.[5] He even goes so far as to say that there is no substance which is not corporeal, and that God himself is a body.[6]

It would seem as if the Great Head of the Church permitted these early writers to commit the grossest mistakes, and to propound the most foolish theories, for the express purpose of teaching us that we are not implicitly to follow their guidance. It might have been thought that authors who flourished on the borders of apostolic times, knew more of the mind of the Spirit than others in succeeding ages; but the truths of Scripture, like the phenomena of the visible creation, are equally intelligible to all generations. If we possess spiritual discernment, the trees and the flowers will display the wisdom and the goodness of God as distinctly to us as they did to our first parents; and, if we have the "unction from the Holy One," we may enter into the meaning of the Scriptures as fully as did Justin Martyr or Irenæus. To assist us in the interpretation of the New Testament, we have at command a

[1] "Apol.," ii., p. 86.

[2] "Contra Hæreses," ii., c. xxii., § 5.

[3] He thus makes His ministry about a year in length. "Adversus Judæos," c. viii.

[4] "De Cultu Feminatum," lib. i., c. 2, and lib. ii., c. 10.

[5] See Kaye's "Tertullian," p. 196. See also Warburton's "Divine Legation of Moses," i. 510. Edit. London, 1837.

[6] "Adversus Hermogenem," c. 35, and "Adversus Praxeam," c. 7.

critical apparatus of which they were unable to avail themselves. Jehovah is jealous of the honor of His Word, and He has inscribed in letters of light over the labors of its most ancient interpreters—"CEASE YE FROM MAN." The "opening of the Scriptures," so as to exhibit their beauty, their consistency, their purity, their wisdom, and their power, is the clearest proof that the commentator is possessed of "the key of knowledge." When tried by this test, Thomas Scott or Matthew Henry is better entitled to confidence than either Origen or Gregory Thaumaturgus. The Bible is its own safest expositor. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."

CHAPTER II.

THE IGNATIAN EPISTLES AND THEIR CLAIMS—THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE.

THE Epistles attributed to Ignatius have attracted greater notice, and created more discussion, than any other uninspired writings of the same extent in existence. The productions ascribed to this author, and now reputed genuine by the most learned of their recent editors, might all be printed on the one-fourth of a page of an ordinary newspaper; and yet, the fatigue of travelling thousands of miles has been encountered,[1] for the special purpose of searching after correct copies of these highly-prized memorials. Large volumes have been written, either to establish their authority, or to prove that they are forgeries; and, if collected together, the books in various languages to which they have given birth, would themselves form a considerable library. Recent discoveries have thrown new light on their pretensions, but though the controversy has continued upwards of three hundred years, it has not hitherto reached a satisfactory termination.[2]

[1] In 1842, Archdeacon Tattam, who had returned only three years before from Egypt, where he had been searching for ancient manuscripts, set out a second time to that country, under the auspices of the Trustees of the British Museum, chiefly for the purpose of endeavoring to procure copies of the Ignatian epistles. On this occasion he succeeded in obtaining possession of the Syriac copy of the three letters published by Dr. Cureton in 1845. Shortly before the Revolution of 1688, Robert Huntingdon, afterward Bishop of Raphoe, and then chaplain to the British merchants at Aleppo, twice undertook a voyage to Egypt in quest of copies of the Ignatian epistles. On one of these occasions he visited the monastery in the Nitrian desert, in which the letters were recently found.

[2] Of the writers who have taken a prominent part in the Ignatian controversy we may particularly mention Ussher, Vossius, Hammond, Daillé, Pearson, Larroque, Rothe, Baur, Cureton, Hefele, Bunsen, and Lightfoot.

The Ignatian letters owe almost all their importance to the circumstance that they are supposed to have been written on the confines of the apostolic age. As very few records remain to illustrate the ecclesiastical history of that period, it is not strange that epistles, purporting to have emanated from one of the most distinguished ministers who then flourished, should have excited uncommon attention. But doubts as to their genuineness have always been entertained by candid and competent scholars. The spirit of sectarianism has entered largely into the discussion of their claims; and, whilst certain distinct references to the subject of Church polity, which they contain, have greatly enhanced their value in the estimation of one party, the same passages have been quoted, by those who repudiate their authority, as so many decisive proofs of their fabrication. The annals of literature furnish scarcely any other case in which ecclesiastical prejudices have been so much mixed up with a question of mere criticism.

The history of the individual to whom these letters are ascribed, has been so metamorphosed by fables, that it is now impossible to ascertain its true outlines. There is a tradition that he was the child whom our Saviour set in the midst of His disciples as a pattern of humility;[1] and as our Lord, on the occasion, took up the little personage in His arms, it has been asserted that Ignatius was therefore surnamed *Theophorus*, that is, *borne or carried by God.*[2] Whatever may be thought as to the truth of this story, it gives a not very inaccurate view of the date of his birth; for he was far advanced in life[3] at the period when he is supposed to have written these celebrated letters. According to the current accounts, he was

[1] Matt. xviii. 2–4; Mark ix. 36.

[2] There has been a keen controversy respecting the accentuation of Θεοφορος. Those who place the accent on the antepenult (Θεόφορος) give it the meaning mentioned in the text; whilst others, placing the accent on the penult (Θεοφόρος), understand by it *God-bearing*, the explanation given in the "Acts of the Martyrdom of Ignatius." See Daillé, "De Scriptis quæ sub Dionysii Areop. et Ignatii Antioch. nom. circumferuntur," lib. ii., c. 25; and Pearson's "Vindiciæ Ignatianæ," pars 3, sec. cap. xii.

[3] Cave reckons that at the time of his martyrdom he was probably "above four score years old." See his "Life of Ignatius."

the second bishop of Antioch at the time of his martyrdom; and as his age suggests that he was then the senior member of the presbytery,[1] the tradition may have thus originated. It is alleged that when Trajan visited the capital of Syria in the ninth year of his reign, or A.D. 107, Ignatius voluntarily presented himself before the imperial tribunal, and avowed his Christianity. He was in consequence condemned to be carried a prisoner to Rome, there to be consigned to the wild beasts for the entertainment of the populace. On his way to the Western metropolis, he stopped at Smyrna. The legend represents Polycarp as then the chief pastor of that city; and, when there, Ignatius received deputations from the neighboring churches, and addressed to them several letters. From Smyrna he proceeded to Troas; where he dictated some additional epistles, including one to Polycarp. The claims of these letters to be considered his genuine productions have led to the controversy we are now to notice.

The story of Ignatius exhibits many marks of error and exaggeration; and yet it is no easy matter to determine how much of it should be pronounced fictitious. Few will venture to assert that the account of his martyrdom is to be rejected as altogether apocryphal; and still fewer will go so far as to maintain that he is a purely imaginary character. There is every reason to believe that, very early in the second century, he was connected with the Church of Antioch; and that, about the same period, he suffered unto death in the cause of Christianity.[2] Pliny, who was then Proconsul of Bithynia,

[1] See Period ii., sec. iii., chap. v. Evodius is commonly represented as the first bishop of Antioch. See Euseb. iii. 22.

[2] According to Malalas, a Greek writer of the sixth century, who lived in Antioch, Ignatius was martyred on the 20th of December, A.D. 115—not at Rome, *but at Antioch*. Bishop Lightfoot rejects this testimony, among other reasons, on account of its late date; but it supplies proof that, in the time of this writer, the story told by Eusebius relative to the Ignatian epistles was discredited. The statement—so minute as to date, place, and other circumstances—is not at all likely to have been fabricated by this witness; it seems to have been handed down to him from earlier times, and though we can not now trace the preceding links of evidence, it possesses stong internal marks of credibility.

mentions that as he did not well know, in the beginning of his administration, how to deal with the accused Christians, he sent those of them who were Roman citizens to the Emperor, that he might himself pronounce judgment.[1] It is possible that the chief magistrate of Syria pursued the same course; and that thus Ignatius was transmitted as a prisoner into Italy. But, on some such substratum of facts, a mass of incongruous fictions has been erected. The "Acts of his Martyrdom," still extant, and written probably upwards of a hundred years after his demise, can not stand the test of chronological investigation; and have evidently been compiled by some very superstitious and credulous author. According to these acts, Ignatius was condemned by Trajan at Antioch in the *ninth*[2] year of his reign; but it has been contended that, not till long afterward, was the Emperor in the Syrian capital.[3] In the "Acts," Ignatius is described as presenting himself before his sovereign *of his own accord*, to proclaim his Christianity—a piece of foolhardiness for which it is difficult to discover any reasonable apology. The report of the interview between Ignatius and Trajan attests that the martyr had entirely lost the humility for which he has obtained credit when a child; as his conduct, in the presence of the Emperor, betrays no small amount of boastfulness and presumption. The account of his trans-

[1] "Fuerunt alii similis amentiæ: quos, quia cives Romani erant, annotavi in Urbem remittendos."—*Plinii, Epist.* lib. x., epist. 96.

[2] The Greek says the *ninth*, and the Latin the *fourth* year. According to both, the condemnation took place *early* in the reign of Trajan. See also the first sentence of the "Acts." In his translation of these "Acts," Wake, regardless of this statement, and in opposition to all manuscript authority, represents the sentence as pronounced "in the *nineteenth* year" of Trajan.

[3] See Jacobson's "Patres Apostolici," ii. p. 504. See also Greswell's "Dissertations," vol. iv., p. 422. It is evident that the date in the "Acts" can not be the mistake of a transcriber, for in the same document the martyrdom is said to have occurred when Sura and Synecius were consuls. These, as Greswell observes, were actually consuls "in the *ninth* of Trajan." Greswell's "Dissertations," iv. p. 416. Hefele, however, has attempted to show that Trajan was really in Antioch about this time. See his "Pat Apost. Opera Prolegomena," p. 35. Edit. Tubingen, 1842.

mission to Rome, to be thrown to wild beasts, presents difficulties with which even the most zealous defenders of his legendary history have found it impossible to grapple. He was sent away, say they, to the Italian metropolis that the sight of so distinguished a victim passing through so many cities on his way to a cruel death might strike terror into the hearts of the Christian inhabitants. But he was conveyed from Syria to Smyrna *by water*,[1] so that the explanation is quite unsatisfactory; and, had the journey been accomplished by land, it is still insufficient, as the disciples of that age were unhappily only too familiar with spectacles of Christian martyrdom. Our perplexity increases as we proceed more minutely to investigate the circumstances under which the epistles are reported to have been composed. Whilst Ignatius was hurried with great violence and barbarity from the East to the West, he remained for many days together in the same place,[2] receiving visitors from the Churches all around, and writing magniloquent epistles. What is still more remarkable, though he was pressed by the soldiers to hasten forward, and though a prosperous gale speedily carried his vessel into Italy,[3] one of these letters is expected to outstrip the rapidity of his own progress, and to reach Rome before himself and his impatient escort!

Early in the fourth century at least seven epistles attributed to Ignatius were in circulation, for Eusebius of Cæsarea, who then flourished, distinctly mentions so many, and states to whom they were addressed. From Smyrna the martyr wrote

[1] "Acts of his Martyrdom," § 8.

[2] He is said, when at Smyrna, to have been visited by a deputation from the Magnesians. But Magnesia on the Meander, the city from which this deputation is alleged to have come, was at least fifty miles from Smyrna; so that, had notice been sent to his friends there, as soon as he arrived in the place where they were to see him, and had the Magnesians set out instantaneously, a considerable time must meanwhile have been occupied. Thus, notwithstanding all the precipitation with which he was hurried along, he must have been several days in Smyrna. See "Corpus Ignatianum," pp. 326, 327.

[3] "He was *pressed* by the soldiers to *hasten* to the public spectacles at great Rome." "And the *wind continuing favorable* to us, in one day and night we were *hurried* on."—*Acts of his Martyrdom*, §§ 10, 11.

four letters—one to the Ephesians, another to the Magnesians, a third to the Trallians, a fourth to the Romans. From Troas he wrote three additional letters—one to Polycarp, a second to the Smyrnæans, and a third to the Philadelphians.[1] At a subsequent period eight more epistles made their appearance, including two to the Apostle John, one to the Virgin Mary, one to Maria Cassobolita, one to the Tarsians, one to the Philippians, one to the Antiochians, and one to Hero the deacon. Thus, no less than fifteen epistles claim Ignatius of Antioch as their author.

It is unnecessary to discuss the merits of the eight letters unknown to Eusebius. They were all fabricated after the time of that historian; and critics have long since concurred in rejecting them as spurious. Until recently, those engaged in the Ignatian controversy were occupied chiefly with the examination of the claims of the documents mentioned by the bishop of Cæsarea. Here, however, the strange variations in the copies tended greatly to complicate the discussion. The letters of different manuscripts, when compared together, disclosed extraordinary discrepancies; for though all the codices contained much of the same matter, a letter in one edition was, in some cases, double the length of the corresponding letter in another. Some writers contended for the genuineness of the shorter epistles, and represented the larger as made up of the true text extended by interpolations; whilst others pronounced the larger letters the originals, and condemned the shorter as unsatisfactory abridgments.[2] But, though both editions had most erudite and zealous advocates, many critics of eminent ability continued to look with distrust on the text, as well of the shorter as of the larger letters; and not a few were disposed to suspect that Ignatius had no share whatever in the composition of any of these documents.

[1] Philadelphia is distant from Troas about two hundred miles. "Corpus Ignatianum," pp. 331, 332. Here, then, is another difficulty connected with this hasty journey. How could a deputation from Philadelphia meet Ignatius in Troas, if he did not stop a considerable time there? See other difficulties suggested by Dr. Cureton. "Cor. Ignat." p. 332.

[2] Such is the opinion maintained by the celebrated Whiston in his "Primitive Christianity." More recently Meier took up nearly the same position.

In the year 1845 a new turn was given to this controversy by the publication of a Syriac version of three of the Ignatian letters. They were printed from a manuscript deposited in 1843 in the British Museum, and obtained, shortly before, from a monastery in the desert of Nitria in Egypt. The work was dedicated by permission to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the views propounded in it were understood to have the sanction of the English metropolitan.[1] Dr. Cureton, the editor, has since entered more fully into the discussion of the subject in his "Corpus Ignatianum"[2]—a volume dedicated to His Royal Highness the Prince Albert, in which the various texts of all the epistles are exhibited, and in which the claims of the three recently discovered letters, as the only genuine productions of Ignatius, are ingeniously maintained. In the Syriac copies,[3] these letters are styled, "*The Three* Epistles of Ignatius, Bishop and Martyr," and thus the inference is suggested that at one time they were *the only three* epistles in existence. Dr. Cureton's statements have made a great impression on the mind of the literary public, and there is at present a pretty general disposition in certain quarters[4] to discard all the other epistles as forgeries, and to accept those preserved in the Syriac version as the veritable compositions of the pastor of Antioch.

It is obvious from the foregoing explanations that increasing light has wonderfully diminished the amount of literature which once obtained credit under the name of the venerable Ignatius. In the sixteenth century he was reputed by many as the author of fifteen letters; it was subsequently discovered that eight of them were apocryphal; farther investigation convinced critics that considerable portions of the remaining seven

[1] See Preface to the "Corpus Ignatianum," p. 4.

[2] Published in 1849. In 1846 he published his "Vindiciæ Ignatianæ; or the Genuine Writings of St. Ignatius, as exhibited in the ancient Syriac version, vindicated from the charge of heresy."

[3] In 1847 another copy of the Syriac version of the three epistles was deposited in the British Museum, and since, Sir Henry Rawlinson has obtained a third copy at Bagdad. See *British Quarterly* for October, 1855, p. 452.

[4] Dr. Lee, late Regius Professor of Hebrew in Cambridge, Chevalier Bunsen, and other scholars of great eminence, have espoused the views of Dr. Cureton.

must be rejected; and when the short text of these epistles was published,[1] about the middle of the seventeenth century, candid scholars confessed that it still betrayed unequivocal indications of corruption.[2] But even some Protestant writers of the highest rank stoutly upheld their claims, and the learned Pearson devoted years to the preparation of a defence of their authority.[3] His "Vindiciæ Ignatianæ" has long been considered by a certain party as unanswerable; and, though the publication has been read by very few,[4] the advocates of what are called "High-Church principles" have been reposing for nearly two centuries under the shadow of its reputation. The critical labors of Dr. Cureton have disturbed their dream of security, as that distinguished scholar has adduced very good evidence to show that about three-fourths of the matter[5] which the Bishop of Chester spent a considerable portion of his mature age in attempting to prove genuine, is the work of an impostor. It is now admitted by the highest authorities that *four* of the seven short letters must be given up as spurious; and the remaining three, which are addressed respectively to

[1] By Archbishop Ussher in 1644, and by Vossius in 1646.

[2] Such was the opinion of Ussher himself. "Concludimus . . . . nullas omni ex parte sinceras esse habendas et genuinas." Dissertation prefixed to his edition of "Polycarp and Ignatius," chap. 18.

[3] Pearson was occupied six years in the preparation of this work. The publication of Daillé, to which it was a reply, appeared in 1666. Daillé died in 1670, at the advanced age of seventy-six. The work of Pearson did not appear until two years afterward, or in 1672. The year following he received the bishopric of Chester as his reward.

[4] "In the whole course of my inquiries respecting the Ignatian Esistles," says Dr. Cureton, "*I have never met with one person who professes to have read Bishop Pearson's celebrated book;* but I was informed by one of the most learned and eminent of the present bench of bishops (Kaye), that Porson, after having perused the 'Vindiciæ,' had expressed to him his opinion that it was a 'very unsatisfactory work.'"—*Corpus Ignat.*, Preface, pp. 14, 15, note. Bishop Pearson's work is written in Latin. Dr. Cureton, in a private letter, informed me that Porson "rejected" the letters as edited by Ussher. Bishop Kaye told him so. See Appendix to my "Old Catholic Church."

[5] The "Three Epistles" edited by Dr. Cureton contain only about the *one-fourth* of the matter of the seven shorter letters edited by Ussher.

Polycarp, to the Ephesians, and to the Romans, and which are found in the Syriac version, are much shorter even than the short epistles which had already appeared under the same designations. The Epistle to Polycarp, the shortest of the seven letters in preceding editions, is here presented in a still more abbreviated form; the Epistle to the Romans wants fully the one-third of its previous matter; and the Epistle to the Ephesians has lost nearly three-fourths of its contents. Nor is this all. In the Syriac version a large fragment of one of the four recently rejected letters reappears; as the new edition of the Epistle to the Romans contains two entire paragraphs to be found in the discarded letter to the Trallians.

It is only due to Dr. Cureton to acknowledge that his publications have thrown immense light on this tedious and keenly agitated controversy. But, unquestionably he has not exhausted the discussion. Instead of abruptly adopting the conclusion that the three letters of the Syriac version are to be received as genuine, we conceive he would have argued more logically had he inferred that they reveal one of the earliest forms of a gross imposture. We are persuaded that the epistles he has edited, as well as all the others previously published, are fictitious,; and we shall endeavor to demonstrate in the sequel of this chapter, that the external evidence in their favor is most unsatisfactory.

When discussing the testimonies from the writers of antiquity in their support, it is not necessary to examine any later witness than Eusebius. The weight of his literary character influenced all succeeding fathers, and some, who perhaps had never seen these documents, refer to them on the strength of his authority.[1] In his "Ecclesiastical History," which was published, as is thought, about A.D. 325, he asserts that Ignatius wrote seven letters, and from these he makes a few quotations.[2] But his admission of the genuineness of a correspondence, bearing date upwards of two hundred years before his own appearance as an author, is an attestation of very doubt-

[1] Dr. Cureton has shown that even the learned Jerome must have known very little of these letters. "Corpus Ignat.," Introd., p. 67.

[2] Euseb. iii., c. 36.

ful value. He often makes mistakes respecting the character of ecclesiastical memorials; and in one memorable case, of far more consequence than that under consideration, he has blundered most egregiously; for he has published, as genuine, the spurious correspondence between Abgarus and our Saviour.[1] He was under strong temptations to form an unduly favorable judgment of the letters attributed to Ignatius, inasmuch as, to use the words of Dr. Cureton, "they seemed to afford evidence to the apostolic succession in several churches, an account of which he professes to be one of the chief objects of his history."[2] His reference to them is decisive as to the fact of their *existence* in the early part of the fourth century; but those who adopt the views propounded in the "Corpus Ignatianum," are not prepared to bow to his critical decision; for on this very occasion he has given his sanction to four letters which they pronounce apocryphal.

The only father who notices these letters before the fourth century, is Origen. He quotes from them twice;[3] the citations which he gives are to be found in the Syriac version of the three epistles;[4] and it would appear from his writings that he was not acquainted with the seven letters current in the days of Eusebius.[5] Those to which he refers were, per-

[1] Euseb. i., c. 13. He describes the Therapeutae of Egypt, a sect of Jewish ascetics mentioned by Philo, as Christians; and thus betrays his utter ignorance of the history of Monachism. See Euseb. ii. 17. It would be easy to prove that the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius is written throughout in the interest of the hierarchy. When endeavoring to make out the apostolical succession, he deliberately applies to ministers of the 1st and 2d centuries, names which were not then current, describing as *Bishops* persons who were only known as Presbyters. He adopted the very objectionable principle that, for the sake of the Church, we may prevaricate or deceive. See Waddington's "History of the Church," p. 87. London, 1833.

[2] "Corpus Ignatianum," Introd., p. 71.

[3] Proleg. in "Cantic. Canticorum," and Homil. vi. in "Lucam."

[4] In the Epistle to the Romans, and the Epistle to the Ephesians.

[5] He quotes the words, "I am not an incorporeal demon," from the "Doctrine of Peter"; but they are found in the shorter recension of the seven letters in the "Epistle to the Smyrnæans," § 3. Had this epistle been known to him, he would certainly have quoted from an apostolic father rather than from a work which he knew to be spurious. See Origen, "Opera," i., p. 49, note.

haps, brought under his notice when he went to Antioch on the invitation of Julia Mammæa, the mother of the Emperor, as, for reasons subsequently to be stated, it is probable they were manufactured in that neighborhood not long before his visit. If presented to him at that time by parties interested in the recognition of their claims, they were exactly such documents as were likely to impose upon him; for the student of Philo, and the author of the "Exhortation to Martyrdom," could not but admire the spirit of mysticism by which they are pervaded, and the anxiety to die under persecution which they proclaim. Whilst, therefore, his quotation of these letters attests their existence in his time, it is of very little additional value. Again and again in his writings we meet with notices of apocryphal works unaccompanied by any intimations of their spuriousness.[1] He asserts that Barnabas, the author of the epistle still extant under his name,[2] was the individual mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles as the companion of Paul; and he frequently quotes the "Pastor" of Hermas[3] as a book given by inspiration of God.[4] Such facts abundantly prove that his recognition of the Ignatian epistles is a very equivocal criterion of their genuineness.

Attempts have been made to show that two other writers, earlier than Origen, have noticed the Ignatian correspondence; and Eusebius himself has quoted Polycarp and Irenæus as if bearing witness in its favor. Polycarp in early life was contemporary with the pastor of Antioch; Irenæus was the disciple of Polycarp; and, could it be demonstrated that either of these fathers vouched for its genuineness, the testimony would be of peculiar importance. But, when their evidence is examined, it is found to be nothing to the purpose. In the Treatise against Heresies, Irenæus speaks, in the following terms, of the heroism of a Christian martyr, "One of our people said, when condemned to the beasts on account of his testimony toward God, As I am the wheat of God, I am also ground by the teeth of beasts, that I may be

[1] "Opera," ii. 20, 21; iii. 271.

[2] See Period ii., sec. ii., chap. i., p. 334. Origen, "Opera," iv. 473.

[3] Ibid., p. 334.

[4] "Opera," i. 79; iv. 683.

found the pure bread of God."[1] These words of the martyr are in the Syriac Epistle to the Romans, and hence it has been inferred that they are a quotation from that letter. But it is far more probable that the words of the letter were copied out of Irenæus, and quietly appropriated, by a forger, to the use of his "Ignatius," with a view to obtain credit for a false document. The individual who uttered them is not named by the pastor of Lyons; and, after the death of that writer, a fabricator could put them into the mouth of whomsoever he pleased without any special danger of detection. The Treatise against Heresies obtained extensive circulation; and as it animadverted on errors which had been promulgated in Antioch,[2] it soon found its way into the Syrian capital.[3] But who can believe that Irenæus describes Ignatius, when he speaks of "*one of our people*"? The martyr was not such an insignificant personage that he could be thus ignored. He was one of the most eminent Christians of his age—the companion of apostles—and the presiding minister of one of the most influential Churches in the world. Irenæus is obviously alluding to some disciple who occupied a very different position. He is speaking, not of what the martyr *wrote*, but of what he *said*—not of his letters, but of his words. Any reader who considers the situation of Irenæus a few years before he published this treatise, can have no difficulty in understanding the reference. He had witnessed at Lyons one of the most terrible persecutions the disciples ever had endured; and, in the letter to the Churches of Asia and Phrygia, he had graphically described its horrors.[4] He there tells how his brethren had been condemned to be thrown to

[1] "Contra Hæreses," lib. v., c. 28, § 4. "Quidam de nostris dixit, propter martyrium in Deum adjudicatus ad bestias: Quoniam frumentum sum Christi, et per dentes bestiarum molor, ut mundus panis Dei inveniar."

[2] Thus he speaks of "Saturninus, who was from Antioch." "Contra Hæreses," lib. i., c. 24, § 1.

[3] It was soon translated into Syriac, See Bunsen's "Hippolytus," iv. Preface, p. 8.

[4] See large extracts from this letter in Euseb. v., c. i. Also Routh's "Reliquiæ," i. 329.

wild beasts, and he records with simplicity and pathos the constancy with which they suffered. But in such an epistle he could not notice every case which had come under his observation, and he here mentions a new instance of the Christian courage of some believer unknown to fame, when he states, "One of our people when condemned to the beasts, said, 'As I am the wheat of God, I am also ground by the teeth of beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of God.'"

The Treatise against Heresies supplies the clearest evidence that Irenæus was quite ignorant of the existence of the Ignatian epistles. These letters contain pointed references to the errorists of the early Church, and had they been known to the pastor of Lyons, he could have brought them to bear with most damaging effect against the heretics he assailed. Ignatius was no ordinary witness, for he had heard the truth from the lips of the apostles; he had spent a long life in the society of the primitive disciples; and he filled one of the most responsible stations that a Christian minister could occupy. The heretics boldly affirmed that they had tradition on their side,[1] and therefore the testimony of Ignatius, as of an individual who had received tradition at the fountain-head, would have been regarded by Irenæus as all-important. And the author of the Treatise against Heresies was not slow to employ such evidence when it was in any way available. He plies his antagonists with the testimony of Clement of Rome,[2] of Polycarp,[3] of Papias,[4] and of Justin Martyr.[5] But throughout the five books of his discussion he never adduces any of the words of the pastor of Antioch. He never throws out any hint from which we can infer that he was aware of the existence of his Epistles.[6] He never even mentions his name. Could we desire more convincing proof that he had never heard of the Ignatian correspondence?

[1] Irenæus, "Contra Hæreses," lib. iii., c. 2, §§ 1, 2.
[2] Lib. iii., c. 3, §§ 3.
[3] Lib. iii., c. iii., §§ 4.
[4] Lib. v., c. xxxiii., §§ 3, 4.
[5] Lib. iv., c. vi., §§ 2.
[6] In his "Vindiciæ," (Pars. i. cap. 6,) Pearson attempts to parry this argument by urging that Irenæus does not mention other writers, such as

The only other witness now remaining to be examined is Polycarp. It has often been affirmed that he distinctly acknowledges the authority of these letters; and yet, when honestly interrogated, he will be found to deliver quite a different deposition. But, before proceeding to consider his testimony, let us inquire his *age* when his epistle was written. It bears the following superscription: "Polycarp, *and the elders who are with him*, to the Church of God which is at Philippi." At this time, therefore, though the early Christians paid respect to hoary hairs, and were not willing to permit persons without experience to take precedence of their seniors, Polycarp was at the head of the presbytery. But, at the death of Ignatius, when according to the current theory he dictated this letter, he was still rather a young man.[1] Such a supposition is very much out of keeping with the tone of the document. In it he admonishes the widows to be sober;[2] he gives advice to the elders and deacons;[3] he expresses his great concern for Valens, an erring brother, who had once been a presbyter among them;[4] and he intimates that the epistle was written at the urgent request of the Philippians themselves.[5] Is it at all probable that Polycarp, at the age of thirty-eight, was in a position to use such a style of address? Are we to believe he was already so well known and so highly venerated that a Christian community on the other side of the Ægean Sea, and the oldest Church in all Greece, applied to him for advice and direction? We must be prepared to admit all this, before

Barnabas, Quadratus, Aristides, Athenagoras, and Theophilus. But the reply is obvious—1. These writers were occupied chiefly in defending Christianity against the attacks of paganism, so that testimonies against heresy could not be expected in their works. 2. None of them were so early as Ignatius, so that their testimony, even could it have been obtained, would have been of less value. Some of them, such as Theophilus, were the contemporaries of Irenæus. 2. None of them held such an important position in the Church as Ignatius.

[1] He was martyred A.D. 155, at the age of eighty-six. According to the "Acts of his Martyrdom," Ignatius was martyred nearly fifty years before, or A.D. 107. Polycarp was, therefore, now about thirty-eight. See more particularly Period ii., sec. iii., chap. v., note, and p. 332, note.

[2] Sec. 4. [3] Secs. 5, 6. [4] Sec. 11. [5] Sec. 3.

we can acknowledge that his epistle refers to Ignatius of Antioch.

Let us attend now to that passage in the letter to the Philippians where he is supposed to speak of the Syrian pastor. "I exhort all of you that ye obey the word of righteousness, and exercise all patience, which ye have seen set forth before your eyes, *not only in the blessed Ignatius, and Zosimus, and Rufus, but also in others of you.*"[1] These words suggest to an ordinary reader that Polycarp is speaking, not of Ignatius of Antioch, but of Ignatius of Philippi. If this Ignatius did not belong to the Philippian Church, why, when addressing its members, does he speak of Ignatius, Zosimus, Rufus, and "OTHERS OF YOU"? Ignatius of Antioch could not have been thus described. But who, it may be asked, were Zosimus and Rufus here mentioned as fellow-sufferers with Ignatius? They were exactly in the position which the words of Polycarp literally indicate; they were men *of Philippi;* and, as such, they are commemorated in the "Martyrologies."[2] It is impossible, therefore, to avoid the conclusion that the Ignatius of Polycarp was also a Philippian.

It appears, then, that this testimony of the pastor of Smyrna has been strangely misunderstood. Ignatius, as is well known, was not a very uncommon name; and several martyrs of the ancient Church bore this designation. Cyprian, for example, tells us of an Ignatius in Africa who was put to death for the profession of Christianity in the former part of the third century. It is evident from the words of Polycarp that there was also an Ignatius of Philippi, as well as an Ignatius of Antioch.

It may, however, be objected that the conclusion of this letter clearly points to Ignatius of Antioch, inasmuch as Polycarp speaks of *Syria*, and of persons interested about Ignatius who might shortly be going there.[4] Some critics of high name

[1] *οὐ μόνον ἐν τοῖς μακαρίοις Ἰγνατίῳ. καὶ Ζωσίμῳ, καὶ Ῥούφῳ ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις τοῖς ἐξ ὑμῶν.*—§ 9.

[2] See Baronius, "Annal. ad Annum. 109," tom. ii., c. 48, and Jacobson's "Pat. Apost." ii. 482, note 6. Edit. Oxon., 1838.

[3] Epist. xxxiv., p. 109.,

[4] "Scripsistis mihi, et vos et Ignatius, ut si quis vadit ad Syriam, deferat

have maintained that this portion of the epistle is destitute of authority, and that it has been added by a later hand to countenance the Ignatian forgery.[1] But every candid and discriminating reader may see that the charge is destitute of foundation. An Ignatian interpolator would not have so mismanaged his business. He would not have framed an appendix which, as we shall presently show, testifies against himself. The passage to which such exception has been taken is unquestionably the true postscript of the letter, for it bears internal marks of genuineness.

In this postscript Polycarp says, "What you know certainly both of Ignatius himself, and of those *who are with him*, communicate."[2] Here is another proof that the Ignatius of Polycarp is not Ignatius of Antioch. The Syrian pastor was hurried with the utmost expedition to Rome, that he might be thrown to the beasts before the approaching termination of the public spectacles; and when he reached the great city, was forthwith consigned to martyrdom.[3] But though letters had been meanwhile passing between Philippi and Smyrna, this Ignatius is still alive. It would appear, too, that Zosimus and Rufus, previously named as his partners in tribulation, continued to be his companions. Polycarp, therefore, is speaking of the "patience" of confessors yet "in bonds,"[4] and not of a man already devoured by the lions.

Other parts of this postscript are equally embarrassing to

literas meas quas fecero ad vos." The Greek of Eusebius is somewhat different, but may express the same sense. See Euseb. iii. 36. There is an important variation even in the readings of Eusebius. See Cotelerius, vol. ii., p. 191, note 3.

[1] Thus Bunsen, in his "Ignatius von Antiochen und seine Zeit," says, "At the present stand-point of the criticism of Ignatius, this passage can only be a witness against itself." And again, "The forger of Ignatius has interpolated this passage." And again, "The connection is entirely broken by that interpolation." (pp. 108, 109). Viewed as a postscript, it is not remarkable that the transition is abrupt.

[2] "Et de ipso Ignatio, et de his qui cum eo sunt, quod certius agnoveritis, significate."

[3] See the "Acts of his Martyrdom," §§ 10, 12.

[4] See this "Epistle," §§ 1, 9.

those who contend for the authority of the Ignatian Epistles. Thus Polycarp says, "The Epistles of Ignatius *which were sent to you by him*, and whatever others we have by us, we have sent to you."[1] If these words apply to Ignatius of Antioch, it follows that he must have written *several* letters to the *Philippians;* and yet it is now almost universally admitted that even the one extant epistle addressed to them in his name is an impudent fabrication. Again, Polycarp states, "Ye have written to me, both ye and Ignatius, that when any one goes to Syria, he can carry my letters to you."[2] But no such suggestion is to be found, either in the Syriac version of the Three Epistles, or in the larger edition known to Eusebius. Could we desire clearer proof that Polycarp must here be speaking of another Ignatius, and another correspondence?

The words we have last quoted deserve attentive consideration. Were a citizen of New York, in the postscript of a letter to a citizen of London, to suggest that his correspondent should take an opportunity of writing to him, when any common friend went to Jerusalem, the Englishman might well feel perplexed by such a communication. Why should a letter from London to New York travel round by Palestine? Such an arrangement would not, however, be a whit more absurd than that seemingly pointed out in this postscript. Philippi and Smyrna were not far distant, and there was considerable intercourse between them; but Syria, of which Antioch was the capital, was in another quarter of the Empire, and Polycarp could have rarely found an individual passing to it from "the chief city" of a "part of Macedonia," and travelling to and fro by Smyrna. This difficulty admits, however, of a very simple and satisfactory solution. We have no entire

[1] "Epistolas sane Ignatii, quæ transmissæ sunt vobis ab eo, et alias, quantascunque apud nos habuimus, transmisimus vobis." According to the Greek of Eusebius we should read, "The letters of Ignatius which were sent *to us* (ἡμῖν) by him." Either reading is alike perplexing to the advocates of the Syriac version of the Ignatian Epistles. See Jacobson, ii. 489, note 5.

[2] See a preceding note, p. 369.

copy of the epistle in the original Greek,[1] and the text of the old Latin version in this place is so corrupt that it is partially unintelligible;[2] but the context often aids in the interpretation of a manuscript, and here it guides us to the meaning. The place mentioned is evidently an island in the Ægean Sea—Syria, Scyra, or Psyria[3]—and the passage thus understood is quite intelligible. Syria, one of the Cyclades, was certainly not on the direct route; but any one who glances at the map may see that a traveller who carried letters either to Scyra or Psyria, conveyed them a considerable part of the way to Philippi; and the sentence so interpreted contains exactly such a suggestion as befits a postscript, for it points out how the correspondence could be maintained. A letter left at Scyra or Psyria was likely soon to find a friend to take it on to Philippi.

As it can be thus shown that the letter of Polycarp, when tested by impartial criticism, refuses to accredit the Epistles ascribed to Ignatius of Antioch, it follows that, with the single exception of Origen, no father of the first three centuries has noticed this correspondence. Had these letters, at the alleged date of their appearance, attracted such attention as they themselves indicate, is it possible that no writer for upwards of a century after the demise of their reputed author, bestowed upon them even a passing recognition? They convey the impression that, when Ignatius was on his way to Rome, all Asia

[1] Only two Greek copies are known to exist, both wanting the concluding part. See Cotelerius, vol. ii., p. 186, note 1.

[2] It is not easy to understand the meaning of the passage, "Si habuerimus tempus opportunum, sive ego, seu legatus quem misero pro vobis." Some words seem to be wanting to complete the sense.

[3] In the first edition of this work it was supposed that Smyrna was the word in the original, and it was shown that this very mistake was made elsewhere; but, on reconsideration, the explanation in the text has been adopted as preferable. The island of Syros, one of the Cyclades, was sometimes called Syria (see Homer, Od. xv. 403); Scyros was also known as Scyra (see Smith's "Dictionary of Ancient Geography"); and Psyra was occasionally written Psyria (see Dunbar's "Greek Lexicon"). Transcribers frequently confounded letters somewhat similar in sound, and thus Psyria would be written Syria—the Σ being put for Ψ.

Minor was moved at his presence—that Greece caught the infection of excitement—and that the Western capital itself awaited, with something like breathless anxiety, the arrival of the illustrious martyr. Strange, indeed, then, that even his letter to the Romans is mentioned by no Western father until between two and three hundred years after the time of its assumed publication! Nor were Western writers wanting to sympathize with its spirit. It would have been quite to the taste of Tertullian, and he could have quoted it to show that some of the peculiar principles of Montanism had been held by a man of the apostolic era. Nor can it be said that had the letter then been in existence, it was likely to have escaped his observation. He had lived for years in Rome, and was a presbyter of the Church of the Imperial city. A man of his inquiring spirit, and literary habits, must have been well acquainted with the Epistle had it obtained currency in Italy. But in not one of his numerous treatises does he ever speak of it, or even name its alleged author.[1] Hippolytus of Portus is another writer who might be expected to know something of this production. He lived within a few miles of Rome, and he was conversant with the history of its Church and with its ecclesiastical memorials. He, as well as Tertullian, could have sympathized with the rugged and ascetic spirit pervading the Ignatian correspondence. But, even in his treatise against all heresies, he has not fortified his arguments by any testimony from these letters. He had evidently never heard of the far-famed documents.[2]

The conclusion to be drawn from these facts is sufficiently obvious. The Ignatian Epistles began to be fabricated in the time of Origen; and the first edition of them appeared, not at

[1] Pearson alleges that the reason why Tertullian does not quote Ignatius against the heretics was because he did not require his testimony! He had, forsooth, apostolic evidence. "Quasi vero Ignatii testimonio opus esset ad eam rem, cujus testem Apostolum habuit." "Vindiciæ," Pars prima, caput ix. He finds it convenient, however, to mention Hermas, Clement of Rome, Justin Martyr, and many others.

[2] See also in Euseb. v. 28, a long extract from a work against the heresy of Artemon, in which various early writers, who asserted that "Christ is God and man," are named, and Ignatius omitted.

Troas or Smyrna, but in Syria or Palestine. At an early period festivals were kept in honor of the martyrs; and on his natal day,[1] why should not the Church of Antioch have something to tell of her great Ignatius? The Acts of his Martyrdom were written in the former part of the third century—a time when the work of ecclesiastical forgery was rife[2]—and the Epistle to the Romans, which is inserted in these Acts, is of earlier date than any of the other letters. The Epistle to the Ephesians, perhaps, next made its appearance, and then followed the Epistle to Polycarp. These letters gradually crept into circulation as "The Three Epistles of Ignatius, Bishop and Martyr." There is every reason to believe that, as edited by Dr. Cureton, they are now presented to the public in their original *language*, as well as in their original form. Copies of these short letters are not known to be extant in any manuscript either Greek or Latin. Dr. Cureton has not attempted any explanation of this emphatic fact. If the Epistle to the Romans, in its newly discovered form, is genuine, how does it happen that there are no previous traces of its existence in the Western Church? How are we to account for the extraordinary circumstance that the Church of Rome can produce no copy of it in either Greek or Latin? She had every reason to preserve such a document had it ever come into her possession; for, even considered as a pious fraud of the third century, the address "*to her who sitteth at the head* in the place of the country of the Romans,"[3] is one

[1] See Neander's "General History," by Torrey, i. 455. Octavo edition. Edinburgh, 1847. See also Kaye's "Tertullian," p. 415.

[2] The number of spurious writings current in the early ages was very great. Shortly after the date mentioned in the text it is well known that an individual named Leucius forged the Acts of John, Andrew, Peter, and others. See Jones on the "Canon," p. 210, and ii., p. 289.

[3] This is a literal translation of part of the superscription of the letter as given by Dr. Cureton himself in his "Epistles of Saint Ignatius," p. 17. In the "Corpus Ignatianum" he has somewhat weakened the strength of the expression by a more free translation—"To her who *presideth* in the place of the country of the Romans." "Corp. Ignat.," p. 230. Tertullian speaks ("De Præscrip.," c. 36) of the "Apostolic sees *presiding over their own places*"—referring to an arrangement then recently made which recognized

of the most ancient testimonies to her early pre-eminence to be found in the whole range of ecclesiastical literature. Why should she have permitted it to be supplanted by an interpolated document? Can any man, who adopts the views of Dr. Cureton, fairly answer such an inquiry?

The mistake of a name in the postscript of the Epistle of Polycarp has had much to do with this Ignatian imposture. An island in the Ægean Sea has been confounded with Syria, the Eastern Province; and the error has led to the incubation of the whole brood of Ignatian letters. The blunder was adopted by Eusebius,[1] and from him passed into general currency. We may thus best account for the strange multiplication of these Ignatian Epistles. It was clear that the Ignatius spoken of by Polycarp had written more letters than what first appeared,[2] and thus the epistles to the Smyrnæans, the Magnesians, the Trallians, and the Philadelphians, in due time emerged into notice. At a subsequent date the letters to the Philippians, the Antiochians, the Virgin Mary, and others, were forthcoming.

The variety of forms assumed by this Ignatian fraud is not the least remarkable circumstance connected with its mysterious history. All the seven Epistles mentioned by Eusebius exist in a Longer and a Shorter Recension; whilst the Syriac version exhibits three of them in a reduced size, and another edition. It is a curious fact that other spurious productions display similar transformations. "*A great number* of spurious or interpolated works of the early ages of Christianity," says Dr. Cureton, "are found in two recensions, a Shorter and a Longer, as in the instance of the Ignatian Epistles. Thus, we find the two Recensions of the Clementines, the two Recensions of the Acts of St. Andrew, ... the Acts of St.

the precedence of Churches to which Apostles had ministered. This arrangement, which was unknown in the time of Ignatius, was suggested by the disturbances and divisions created by the heretics. Though the words in the text may be quoted in support of the claims of the bishop of Rome, they do not necessarily imply his presidency over all Churches, but they plainly acknowledge his position as at the head of the Churches of Italy.

[1] See Euseb. iii. 36.

[2] See preceding note, p. 370.

Thomas, the Journeying of St. John, the Letter of Pilate to Tiberius."[1] It is still more suspicious that some of these spurious writings present a striking similarity *in point of style* to the Ignatian Epistles.[2] The standard coin of the realm is seldom put into the crucible, but articles of pewter or of lead are freely melted down and recast according to the will of the modeller. We can not add a single leaf to a genuine flower, but an artificial rose may be exhibited in quite another form by a fresh process of manipulation. Such, too, has been the history of ancient ecclesiastical records. The genuine works of the fathers have come down to us in a state of wonderful preservation; and comparatively few attempts have been made, by interpolation or otherwise, to interfere with their integrity;[3] but spurious productions were considered legitimate subjects for the exercise of the art of the fabricator; and hence the strange discrepancies in their text which have so often puzzled their editors.

[1] "Corpus Ignatianum," Intro., p. 86, note.

[2] See "Corpus Ignatianum," pp. 265, 267, 269, 271, 286.

[3] See Blunt's "Right Use of the Early Fathers." First Series. Lectures v. and vi.

CHAPTER III.

THE IGNATIAN EPISTLES AND THEIR CLAIMS. THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE.

THE history of the Ignatian Epistles may well remind us of the story of the Sibylline Books. A female in strange attire appeared before Tarquin of Rome, offering to sell nine manuscripts she had in her possession; but the king, discouraged by the price, declined the application. The woman withdrew; destroyed the one-third of her literary treasures; and, returning again into the royal presence, demanded the same price for what were left. The monarch once more refused to come up to her terms; and the mysterious visitor retired again, and burnt the one-half of her remaining store. Her extraordinary conduct excited much astonishment; and, on consulting with his augurs, Tarquin was informed that the documents she had at her disposal were most valuable, and that he should by all means endeavor to secure such a prize. The king now willingly paid for the three books not yet committed to the flames, the full price originally demanded for all the manuscripts. The Ignatian Epistles have experienced something like the fate of the Sibylline oracles. In the sixteenth century, fifteen letters were brought out from beneath the mantle of a hoary antiquity, and offered to the world as the productions of the pastor of Antioch. Scholars refused to receive them on the terms required, and forthwith eight of them were admitted to be forgeries. In the seventeenth century, the seven remaining letters, in a somewhat altered form, again came forth from obscurity, and claimed to be the works of Ignatius. Again, discerning critics refused to ac-

knowledge their pretensions,[1] but curiosity was roused by this second apparition, and many expressed an earnest desire to obtain a sight of the real epistles. Greece, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt were ransacked in search of them, and at length three letters are found. The discovery creates general gratulation; it is confessed that four of the Epistles, so lately asserted to be genuine, are apocryphal; and it is boldly said that the three now forthcoming are above challenge.[2] But Truth still refuses to be compromised, and sternly disowns these claimants for her approbation. The internal evidence of these three Epistles abundantly attests that, like the last three books of the Sibyl, they are only the last shifts of a grave imposture.[3]

The candid investigator, who compares the Curetonian version of the letters with that previously in circulation, must acknowledge that Ignatius, in his new dress, has lost nothing of his absurdity and extravagance. The passages of the Epistles, formerly felt to be so objectionable, are yet to be found here in all their unmitigated folly. Ignatius is still the same anti-evangelical formalist, the same puerile boaster, the same dreaming mystic, and the same crazy fanatic. These are weighty charges, and yet they can be substantiated. But we must enter into details, that we may fairly exhibit the spirit, and expose the falsehood of these letters.

I. The style of the Epistles is certainly not above suspicion.

[1] The Master of Trinity College, Cambridge—the prince of English critics—rejected the defence of these letters published nearly half a century before by Pearson. In 1718 "Cambridge was in a great ferment on account of Dr. Bentley having, on occasion of a Divinity Act, made a speech *condemning the Epistles of St. Ignatius*."—*Life of Richard Bentley, D.D., by J. H. Monk, D.D., Lord Bishop of Gloucester*, ii. 44, note, 2d edit.

[2] It would be very unfair to follow up this comparison by speaking of the Trustees of the British Museum as the representatives of hierarchal pride and power, proceeding, like Tarquin at the instigation of his augurs, to give a high price for the manuscripts. These gentlemen have rendered good service to the cause of truth and literature by the purchase.

[3] Bunsen rather reluctantly admits that the highest literary authority of the present century, the late Dr. Neander, declined to recognize even the Syriac version of the Ignatian Epistles. See "Hippolytus and his Age," iv. Preface, p. 26.

On the ground of style alone, it is, unquestionably, hazardous to pronounce a decisive judgment on any document; but, if such an element is ever to be taken into consideration, it can not, in this case, be overlooked. Of the seven epistles mentioned by Eusebius, there was one which scholars of the highest reputation always challenged as counterfeit. In style it appeared to them so different from the rest of the letters, and so unlike what was to be expected from an apostolic minister, that some who were prepared to admit the genuineness of the other documents, did not hesitate to declare it a forgery. We allude to the Epistle to Polycarp. Even Archbishop Ussher and Cardinal Bona[1] concurred in its condemnation. It so happens, however, that it is one of the three letters recently re-edited; and that, of the three, *it has been the least altered.* If, then, such a man as Ussher be considered a safe and sufficient judge of the value of an ancient ecclesiastical memorial, the Epistle to Polycarp, published by Dr. Cureton, must be pronounced spurious. Their editor urges that the letters to the Ephesians and Romans, as expurgated in the Syriac version, now closely resemble the Epistle to Polycarp, in style; and, if so, may we not fairly infer that, had they been presented, in their new form, to the learned Primate of Armagh, consistency should have bound him to denounce them also as forgeries?

II. The way in which the Word of God is ignored in these Epistles argues strongly for their spuriousness. Every one acquainted with the early fathers has observed their frequent use of the sacred records. A considerable portion of a chapter is sometimes introduced in a quotation.[2] Hence were all the copies of the Bible lost and the writings of these fathers preserved, a large share of the Holy Volume could be recovered. But Ignatius would contribute nothing to the work of restoration; as, in the whole of the three letters, not a single

[1] See "Corpus Ignat." Introd., p. 51.

[2] Thus, in his "Epistle to the Corinthians," Clemens Romanus, on one occasion (§ 16), quotes the whole of the 53d chapter of Isaiah; and, on another (§ 18), the whole of the 51st Psalm, with the exception of the last two verses.

verse of Scripture is given at length. They, no doubt, occasionally use Bible phraseology, as without it an ecclesiastical document could not well be written; but not one promise is quoted, and not one testimony from the Word is repeated for the edification of the faithful.[1] An apostolic pastor on his way to martyrdom would have written very differently. He would have reminded his brethren of the "lively oracles," and mentioned some of those precious assurances which contributed to his own spiritual refreshment. He would have told them to have "no confidence in the flesh";[2] to take unto themselves "the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God";[3] and to lay aside every weight and the sin which did so easily beset them, "*looking unto Jesus.*"[4] But, instead of adopting such a course, this Ignatius addressed them in the style of a starched and straitlaced churchman. "Let your treasures," says he, "be your good works. Let your baptism be to you as armory." "*Look to the bishop* that God also may look upon you. I will be instead of the souls of those who are subject to the bishop, and the presbyters and the deacons."[5] What intelligent Christian can believe that a minister, instructed by

[1] How different from the course pursued by Clement of Rome and by Polycarp! Thus Clement says to the Corinthians, "Let us do *as it is written*," and then goes on to quote several passages of Scripture. § 13. Polycarp says, "I trust that ye are well *exercised in the Holy Scriptures*," and then proceeds, like Clement, to make some quotations. § 12.

[2] Phil. iii. 3. [3] Eph. vi. 17. [4] Heb. xii. 1, 2.

[5] "Epistle to Polycarp." Lest the plain English reader should believe that the folly of the original is exaggerated in the translation, I beg to say that, here and elsewhere, the English version of Dr. Cureton is given word for word. After an elaborate attempt to vindicate the claims of the Curetonian letters, Bishop Lightfoot thus speaks of the seven Epistles of Eusebius: "As regards the substances they contain, many extravagances of sentiment and teaching, more *especially relating to the episcopal offices from which the Curetonian letters are free, and which one would not willingly believe written by the saint himself.*" *Contemporary Review* for Feb., 1875, p. 358. The quotation in the text, *which is from the Curetonian version*, attests that there is no ground for the Bishop's exception in its favor. In his articles in the *Contemporary Review* he does not notice, much less grapple with, the criticisms in these chapters.

Paul or Peter, and filling one of the most important stations in the Apostolic Church, was verily such an ignorant driveller?

III. The chronological blunders in these Epistles betray their forgery. In the "Acts of the Martyrdom of Ignatius," he and Polycarp are represented as "fellow scholars" of the Apostle John,[1] and the pastor of Smyrna is supposed to be, in point of age, at least as venerable a personage as the pastor of Antioch. The letter to Polycarp is evidently written under the same impression. Ignatius there says to him, "I praise God that I have been *deemed worthy of thy countenance*, which in God I long after." When these words are supposed to have been penned, Polycarp was only about eight and thirty years of age;[2] and the Church of Smyrna, with which he was connected, did not occupy a very prominent place in the Christian commonwealth. Is it credible that a man of the mature faith and large experience of Ignatius thus addressed so youthful a minister? It is also passing strange that the aged martyr committed all the widows of the community to his special guardianship, and thought it necessary to add, "It is becoming to men and women who marry, that they marry *by the counsel of the bishop*." Was an individual, who was himself still comparatively young, the most fitting person to give advice as to these matrimonial engagements? A similar mistake as to age is made in the case of Onesimus, who is supposed to be bishop of Ephesus. This minister, who is understood to be mentioned in the New Testament,[3] is said at an early date to have been pastor of the Church of the metropolis of the Proconsular Asia; and the Ignatian forger obviously imagined that he was still alive when his hero passed through Smyrna on his way to the Western capital. But Onesimus perished in the Domitian persecution,[4] so that Ignatius is made to write to a Christian brother who had been long in his grave.[5] The fabricator proceeds more cautiously

[1] Sec. 8.

[2] See Period ii., sec. ii., chap. ii., p. 367.

[3] Epistle to Philemon, 10.

[4] See Daillé, lib. ii., c. 13, p. 316.

[5] According to some accounts, Timothy presided over the Church of Ephesus until nearly the close of the first century, when he was succeeded by Gaius. See Daillé, ii., c. 13. Some attempt to get over the difficulty by

in his letter to the Romans. How marvellous that this old gentleman, who is willing to pledge his soul for every one who would submit to the bishop, does not find it convenient to *name* the bishop of Rome! The experiment would have been somewhat hazardous. The early history of the Roman Church was better known than that of any other in the world, and, had he here made a mistake, the whole cheat might have been at once detected. Though his erudition was so great that he could tell "the places of angels,"[1] he evidently did not dare to commit himself by giving us a piece of earthly information, and by telling us who was at the head of the Church of the Great City in the ninth year of the reign of Trajan. But the same prudence does not prevail throughout the Epistle. He here obviously speaks of the Church of Rome, not as she existed a few years after the death of Clement, but of the same Church as she was known after the death of Victor. In the beginning of the second century the Church of the Syrian capital did not acknowledge the precedence of her Western sister. On the fall of Jerusalem, the Church of Antioch was herself the first Christian community in the Empire. She had a higher antiquity, a more distinguished prestige, and perhaps a more numerous membership than any other Church in existence. In the Syrian metropolis the disciples had first been called Christians; there, Barnabas and Paul had been separated to the work to which the Lord had called them; there, Peter had preached; and there, prophets had labored. But a century had brought about a wonderful change. The Church of Rome had meanwhile obtained the first place among Christian societies; and, about the middle of the third century, "the See of Peter" began to be honored as the centre of Catholic unity. Toward the close of the second century, many persons of rank and power joined her communion,[2] and

alleging that there was a *second* Onesimus in Ephesus, who succeeded Gaius, but of this there is no evidence whatever. The writer who thought that Ignatius had been at school with Polycarp, also believed, and with greater reason, that he was contemporary with the Onesimus of the New Testament.

[1] "Epistle to the Romans."

[2] Euseb. v. 21.

her political influence was soon felt to be so formidable that even the Roman Emperor began to be jealous of the Roman bishop.[1] But the Ignatian forger did not take into account this ecclesiastical revolution. Hence he here incautiously speaks in the language of his own age, and writing "to her *who sitteth at the head* in the place of the country of the Romans," he says to her, with all due humility, "I am not commanding you like Peter and Paul"[2]—"Ye have taught others"—"It is easy for you to do whatsoever you please."

IV. Various words in these Epistles have a meaning which they did not acquire till long after the time of Ignatius. Thus, the term employed in the days of the Apostles to denote *purity*, or *chastity*, here signifies *celibacy*.[3] Even in the commencement of the third century those who led a single life were beginning to be considered Christians of a superior type, as contrasted with those who were married; and clerical celibacy was becoming very fashionable.[4] The Ignatian fabricator writes under the influence of the popular sentiment. "The house of the Church" at Antioch, of which Paul of Samosata kept possession after his deposition in A.D. 269,[5]

[1] See Period ii., sec. i., chap. v., p. 322.

[2] Paul was certainly at Rome, but Peter's presence there is not so clear. According to the reading of some copies of Irenæus, in the celebrated passage, lib. iii., c. 3, § 2, the Church of Rome is said to have been founded by "Paul and Peter" (see Stieren's "Irenæus," i. 428); but Ignatius here uses the style of expression current in the third century, and speaks of "Peter and Paul."

[3] In the Epistle to Polycarp, Ignatius says, "If a man be able in strength *to continue in chastity* (*i.e.*, celibacy), *for the honor of the body of our Lord*, let him continue without boasting." Here the word in the Greek is ἁγνεία. But this word is applied in the New Testament to Timothy, who may have been "the husband of one wife." See 1 Tim. iv. 12, and v. 2. It is also applied by Polycarp, in his Epistle, to married women. "Let us teach your (or our) wives to walk in the faith that is given to them, both *in love and purity*" (ἀγάπῃ καὶ ἁγνείᾳ).—*Epistle to the Philippians*, § 4. See also "The Shepherd of Hermas," book ii., command. 4; Cotelerius, i. 87.

[4] This is very evident from the recently discovered work of Hippolytus, as well as from other writers of the same period. See Bunsen's "Hippolytus," i. p. 312.

[5] Euseb. vii. 30.

seems to have been a dwelling appropriated to the use of the ecclesiastical functionaries,[1] and the schemer who wrote the first draft of these letters evidently believed that the ministers of Christ were a brotherhood of bachelors. Hence Ignatius is made thus to address Polycarp and his clergy, "Labor together one with another; make the struggle together one with another; run together one with another; suffer together one with another; *sleep together one with another; rise together one with another.*" Polycarp and others of the elders of Smyrna were probably married;[2] so that some inconvenience might have attended this arrangement.

The word *bishop* is another term found in these Epistles, and employed in a sense which it did not possess at the alleged date of their publication. Every one knows that, in the New Testament, it does not signify the chief pastor of a Church; but, about the middle of the second century, as will subsequently appear,[3] it began to have this acceptation. Clement of Rome, writing a few years before the time of the martyrdom of Ignatius, uses the words bishop and presbyter interchangeably.[4] Polycarp, in his own Epistle, dictated upwards of forty years after the death of the Syrian pastor, still adheres to the same phraseology.[5] In the Peshito version of the New Testament, executed probably in the former half of the

[1] Some have supposed that this was the church of Antioch, but it is not likely that Paul cared to retain the church when deserted by the people. Besides, the building is called, not the church, but "the house of the Church" (τῆς ἐκκλησίας οἶκος). In the Life of Augustine, by Possidius (cap. xxiv.), the building in which the clergy resided is called "Domus ecclesiæ." August. opera i. 53. Edit. Migne, 1861. See also Todd's "St. Patrick," 477, Dublin, 1864.

[2] If the reading adopted by Junius, and others, of a passage in the 4th chapter of his Epistle be correct, Polycarp must have been a married man, and probably had a family. "Let us teach *our wives* to walk in the faith that is given to them, both in love and purity, ... and *to bring up their children* in the instruction and fear of the Lord." See Jacobson's "Pat. Apost." ii. 472, note.

[3] Period ii., sec. iii., chap. vii.

[4] See his "Epistle to the Corinthians," c. 42, 44, 47, 54.

[5] It is employed likewise by Papias (see Euseb. iii. 39), and even by Irenæus (Euseb. v. 20).

second century,[1] the same terminology prevails.[2] Ignatius, however, is far in advance of his generation. When new terms are introduced, or when new meanings are attached to designations already current, it seldom happens that an old man changes his style of speaking. He is apt to persevere, in spite of fashion, in the use of the phraseology to which he has been accustomed from his childhood. But Ignatius is an exception to all such experience, for he repeats the new nomenclature with as much flippancy as if he had never heard any other.[3] Surely this minister of Antioch is worthy of all the celebrity he has attained, for he can not only carry on a written correspondence with the dead, but also anticipate by half a century even the progress of language!

V. The puerilities, vaporing, and mysticism of these letters proclaim their forgery. We expect an aged apostolic minister, on his way to martyrdom, to speak as a man in earnest, to express himself with some degree of dignity, and to eschew trivial and ridiculous comparisons. But, when treating of a grave subject, what can be more silly or indecorous than such language as the following: "Ye are raised on high by the engine of Jesus Christ, which is the cross, and ye are drawn by the rope, which is the Holy Ghost, and your pulley is your faith."[4] Well may the Christian reader exclaim, with indignation, as he peruses these words, Is the Holy Ghost then a mere rope? Is that glorious Being who worketh in us to will and to do according to His own good pleasure, a mere piece of

[1] See Westcott on the "Canon," pp. 262, 264, 265.

[2] "In the estimation of those able and apostolical men who, in the second century, prepared the Syriac version of the New Testament for the use of some of the Oriental Churches, the *bishop and presbyter* of the apostolic ordination were *titles of the same individual*. Hence in texts wherein the Greek word *episcopos*, 'bishop,' occurs, it is rendered in their version by the Syriac word '*Kashisha*,' presbyter." — *Etheridge's Syrian Churches and Gospels*, pp. 102, 103.

[3] The use of the word *catholic* in the "Seven Epistles," edited by Ussher, is sufficient to discredit them. See "Epist. to Smyrnæans," § 8. The word did not come into use until toward the close of the second century. See Period ii., sec. iii., chap. viii., and p. 306, note.

[4] "Epistle to the Ephesians."

tackling pertaining to the ecclesiastical machinery, to be moved and managed according to the dictation of Bishop Ignatius?[1] But the frivolity of this impostor is equalled by his gasconade. He thus tantalizes the Romans with an account of his attainments, "I am able to write to you heavenly things, *but I fear lest I should do you an injury*." . . . . "I am able to know heavenly things, and the places of angels, and the station of powers that are visible and invisible." Where did he gather all this recondite lore? Certainly not from the Old or New Testament. May we not safely pronounce this man to be one who seeks to be wise above what is written, "intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind"?[2] He seems, indeed, to have himself had some suspicion that such was his character, for he says, again, to his brethren of the Western metropolis, "I know many things in God, but I moderate myself that I may not *perish through boasting;* for now it is becoming to me that I should fear the more abundantly, and should not look to *those that puff me up*." Let us now hear a specimen of the mysticism of this dotard. "There was hidden from the Ruler of this world the virginity of Mary, and the birth of our Lord, and the three mysteries of the shout, which were done in the quietness of God by means of the star, and here by the manifestation of the Son magic began to be dissolved."[3] Who can undertake to expound such jargon? What are we to understand by "the quietness of God"? Who can tell how "the three mysteries of the shout" were "done by means of the star"?

VI. The unhallowed and insane anxiety for martyrdom which appears throughout these letters is another decisive proof of their fabrication. He who was, in the highest sense, the Faithful Witness betrayed no fanatic impatience for the horrid tragedy of crucifixion; and, true to the promptings of His

[1] Daillé has well observed, "Funi Dei quidem verbum, ministerium, beneficia non inepte comparaveris; Spiritum vero, qui his, ut sic dicam, divinæ benignitatis funiculis, ad nos movendos et attrahendos utitur, ipsi illi quo utitur, funi comparare, ab omni ratione alienum est."—Lib. ii., c. 27, pp. 409, 410.

[2] Col. ii. 18.

[3] "Epistle to the Ephesians."

human nature, He prayed, in the very crisis of His agony, "O my Father, *if it be possible, let this cup pass from me*."[1] The Scriptures represent the most exalted saints as shrinking instinctively from suffering. In the prophecy announcing the violent death of Peter, it is intimated that even the intrepid apostle of the circumcision should feel disposed to recoil from the bloody ordeal. "When thou shalt be old," said our Lord to him, "thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee *whither thou wouldest not*."[2] Paul mentions with thankfulness how, on a critical occasion, the Lord stood with him, and "*delivered*" him "out of the mouth of the lion."[3] Long after the apostolic age, the same spirit continued to be cherished, and hence we are told of Polycarp that, even when bowed down by the weight of years, he felt it right to retire out of the way of those who sought his destruction. The disciples, whom he had so long taught, took the same view of Christian duty; and accordingly, in the Epistle of the Church of Smyrna, which records his martyrdom, the conduct of those who "present themselves *of their own accord* to the trial" is emphatically condemned.[4] "We do not," say the believers of Smyrna, "commend those who offer themselves to persecution, *seeing the Gospel teaches no such thing*."[5] But a man who enjoyed much higher advantages than Polycarp—a minister who was contemporary with all the apostles—a ruler of the Church who occupied a far more prominent and influential position than the pastor of Smyrna, is exhibited in the legend of his martyrdom as appearing "of his own free will"[6] at the judgment-seat of the Emperor, and as manifesting the utmost anxiety to be delivered

[1] Matt. xxvi. 39. [2] John xxi. 18. [3] 2 Tim. iv. 17.

[4] We have here an additional and very clear proof that Polycarp, in his Epistle, is not referring to Ignatius of Antioch. Instead of pronouncing the letters now current as treating "of faith and *patience*, and of all things that pertain to edification," he would have condemned them as specimens of folly, impatience, and presumption. Dr. Cureton seems to think that, because Ignatius was an old man, he was at liberty to throw away his life ("Corp. Ignat.," p. 321); but Polycarp was still older, and he thought differently.

[5] Sec. 4. [6] See "Corpus Ignatianum," p. 253.

into the mouth of the lion. In the commencement of the second century the Churches of Rome and Ephesus possessed as much spiritual enlightenment as any other Churches in the world, and it is a libel on their Christianity to suppose that they could have listened with any measure of complacency to the senseless ravings found even in the recent edition of the Ignatian Letters.[1] The writer is made to assure the believers in these great cities that he has an unquenchable desire to be eaten alive, and he beseeches them to pray that he may enjoy this singular gratification. "I hope," says he, "*through your prayers* that I shall be devoured by the beasts in Rome."[2] . . . . "I beg of you, be not with me in the love that is not in its season. Leave me, that I may be for the beasts, that by means of them I may be worthy of God. . . . . With provoking *provoke ye the beasts* that they may be a grave for me, and may leave nothing of my body, that not even when I am fallen asleep may I be a burden upon any man. . . . . I rejoice in the beasts which are prepared for me, and *I pray that they may be quickly found for me*, and I will provoke them that they may quickly devour me."[3] Every man jealous for the honor of primitive Christianity should be slow to believe that an apostolic preacher addressed such outrageous folly to apostolic Churches.

When reviewing the external evidence in support of these Epistles, we have had occasion to show that they were fabricated in the former part of the third century. The internal evidence corroborates the same conclusion. Ecclesiastical history attests that during the fifty years preceding the death of Cyprian,[4] the principles here put forward were fast gaining ascendency. As early as the days of Tertullian, ritualism was

[1] The reader is to understand that all the extracts given in the text are from the Syriac version of the "Three Epistles."

[2] "Epistle to the Ephesians."

[3] "Epistle to the Romans." Pearson can see nothing but the perfection of piety in all this. "In quibus nihil putidum, nihil odiosum, nihil *inscitè* aut *imprudenter* scriptum, est." . . . . "Omnia cùm pia, legitima, præclara."—*Vindiciæ*, pars secunda, c. ix.

[4] From A.D. 208 to A.D. 258.

rapidly supplanting the freedom of evangelical worship; baptism was beginning to be viewed as an "armor" of marvellous potency;[1] the tradition that the great Church of the West had been founded by Peter and Paul was now extensively propagated; and there was an increasing disposition throughout the Empire to recognize the precedence of "her who sitteth at the head in the place of the country of the Romans." It is apparent from the writings of Cyprian that in some quarters the "church system" was already matured. The language ascribed to Ignatius—"Be careful for unanimity, than *which there is nothing more* excellent"[2]—then expressed a prevailing sentiment. To maintain unity was considered a higher duty than to uphold truth, and to be subject to the bishop was deemed one of the greatest of evangelical virtues. Celibacy was then confounded with chastity, and mysticism was extensively occupying the place of scriptural knowledge and intelligent conviction. And the admiration of martyrdom which presents itself in such a startling form in these Epistles was one of the characteristics of the period. Paul taught that a man may give his body to be burned and yet want the spirit of the Gospel;[3] but Origen does not scruple to describe martyrdom as "the cup of salvation," the baptism which cleanses the sufferer, the act which makes his blood precious in God's sight to the redemption of others.[4] Do not all these circumstances combined supply abundant proof that these Epistles were written in the time of this Alexandrian father?[5]

[1] Thus in the "Acts of Paul and Thecla," fabricated about the beginning of the third century, Thecla says—"Give me the seal of Christ (*i.e.* baptism) and *no temptation shall touch me*," c. 18. See Jones on the "Canon of the New Testament," ii., p. 312.

[2] "Epistle to Polycarp." [3] 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

[4] See Blunt's "Early Fathers," p. 237. See also Origen's "Exhortation to Martyrdom," §§ 27, 30, 50.

[5] According to Dr. Lee, a strenuous advocate for the Syriac version of the "Three Epistles," *this translation*, as he supposes it to be, was made, "not later perhaps than the close of the second, or beginning of the *third century*." "Corpus Ignat.," Introd., p. 86, note. Dr. Cureton occasionally supplies strong presumptive evidence that the translation has been made, not from Greek into Syriac, but from Syriac into Greek. "Cor. Ignat.," p. 278.

It is truly wonderful that men, such as Dr. Cureton, have permitted themselves to be befooled by these Syriac manuscripts. It is still more extraordinary that writers, such as the pious and amiable Milner,[1] have published, with all gravity, the rhapsodies of Ignatius for the edification of their readers. It would almost appear as if the name *Bishop* has such a magic influence on some honest and enlightened Episcopalians, that when the interests of their denomination are supposed to be concerned, they can be induced to close their eyes against the plainest dictates of common sense and the clearest light of historical demonstration. In deciding on matters of fact the spirit of party should never be permitted to interfere. Truth is the common property of the catholic Church; and no good and holy cause can require the support of an apocryphal correspondence.

It is no mean proof of the sagacity of the great Calvin, that, upwards of three hundred years ago, he passed a sweeping sentence of condemnation on these Ignatian Epistles. At the time, many were startled by the boldness of his language, and it was thought that he was somewhat precipitate in pronouncing such a decisive judgment. But he saw distinctly, and he therefore spoke fearlessly. There is a far more intimate connection than many are disposed to believe between sound theology and sound criticism, for a right knowledge of the Word of God strengthens the intellectual vision, and assists in the detection of error wherever it may reveal itself. Had Pearson enjoyed the same clear views of Gospel truth as the Reformer of Geneva, he would not have wasted so many precious years

[1] Though Milner, in his "History of the Church of Christ," quotes these letters so freely, he seems to have scarcely turned his attention to the controversy respecting them. Hence he intimates that Ussher reckoned *seven* of them genuine, though it is notorious that the Primate of Armagh rejected the Epistle to Polycarp. (See Milner, cent. ii., chap. i.) Others, as well as Milner, who have written respecting these Epistles, have committed similar mistakes. Thus, Dr. Elrington, Regius Professor of Divinity in Trinity College, Dublin, the recent editor of "Ussher's Works," when referring to the Primate's share in this controversy, speaks of "the recent discovery of a Syriac version of *four* Epistles by Mr. Cureton!" "Life of Ussher," p. 235, note.

in writing a learned vindication of the nonsense attributed to Ignatius. Calvin knew that an apostolic man was acquainted with apostolic doctrine, and he saw that these letters were the productions of an age when the pure light of Christianity was greatly obscured. Hence he denounced them so emphatically: and time has verified his deliverance. His language respecting them has been often quoted, but we feel we can not more appropriately close our observations on this subject than by another repetition of it. "There is nothing more abominable than that trash which is in circulation under the name of Ignatius.' [1]

[1] "Instit.," lib. i., c. xiii., § 29.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GNOSTICS, THE MONTANISTS, AND THE MANICHÆANS.

THE proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah was the commencement of a new era in the history of the world. The Gospel spread on all sides with great rapidity; it was felt to be a religion for the common people; and some individuals of highly cultivated minds soon acknowledged its authority. For a time its progress was impeded by the persecutions of Nero and Domitian; but, in the beginning of the second century, it started upon a new career of prosperous advancement, and quickly acquired such a position that the most distinguished scholars and philosophers could no longer overlook its pretensions. In the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian, a considerable number of men of learning were already in its ranks; but, on the whole, it derived very equivocal aid from the presence of these new adherents. Not a few of the literati who joined its standard attempted to corrupt it; and one hundred and twenty years after the death of the Apostle John, the champions of orthodoxy had to contend against no less than thirty-two heresies.[1]

Of those who adulterated the Gospel, the Gnostics were by far the most subtle, the most active, and the most formidable. The leaders of the party were all men of education; and as they were to be found chiefly in the large cities, the Church in these centres of influence was in no small degree embarrassed and endangered by their speculations. Some of the peculiarities of Gnosticism have been already noticed;[2] but as it made most

[1] See Bunsen's "Hippolytus," i., p. 27.

[2] Period i., sec. ii., chap. iii., pp. 182, 183.

progress and awakened most anxiety during the second century, we must here advert more distinctly to its outlines. The three great antagonists of the Gospel were the Grecian philosophy, the heathen mythology, and a degenerate Judaism; and Gnosticism was an attempt to effect a compromise between Christianity and these rivals. As might have been expected, the attempt met with much encouragement; for many, who hesitated to accept the new religion unconditionally, were constrained to acknowledge that it exhibited many elements of truth and divinity; and they were, therefore, prepared to look on it with favor when presented to them in an altered shape and furnished with certain favorite appendages. The Gnostics called themselves believers; and their most celebrated teachers would willingly have remained in the bosom of the Church; but it was soon discovered that their principles were subversive of the New Testament revelation; and they were accordingly excluded from ecclesiastical fellowship.

Gnosticism assumed a variety of forms, and almost every one of its teachers had his own distinctive creed; but, as a system, it was always known by certain remarkable features. It uniformly ignored the doctrine that God made all things out of nothing;[1] and, taking for granted the eternity of matter, it tried to account, on philosophical principles, for the moral and spiritual phenomena of the world which we inhabit. The *Gnosis*,[2] or knowledge, which it supplied, and from which it derived its designation, was a strange congeries of wild speculations. The Scriptures describe the Most High as humbling Himself to behold the things that are on earth,[3] as exercising a constant providence over all His creatures, as decking the lilies of the valley, and as numbering the very hairs of our heads; but Gnosticism exhibited the Supreme God as separated by an immeasurable interval from matter, and as having no direct communication with anything thus contaminated. The theory by means of which many of its adherents endeavored to solve the problem of the origin of

[1] See Tertullian, "Adversus Hermogenem," c. x. and iv.

[2] γνῶσις. [3] Ps. cxiii. 6.

evil,[1] and to trace the connection between the finite and the infinite, was not without ingenuity. They maintained that a series of Æons, or divine beings, emanated from the Primal Essence; but, as sound issuing from a given point gradually becomes fainter till it is finally lost in silence, each generation of Æons, as it receded from the great Fountain of Spiritual Existence, lost somewhat of the vigor of divinity; and at length an Æon was produced without power sufficient to maintain its place in the Pleroma, or habitation of the Godhead. This scheme of a series of Æons of gradually decreasing excellence was designed to show how, from an Almighty and Perfect Intelligence, a weak and erring being could be generated. There were Gnostics who carried the principle of attenuation so far as to teach that the inhabitants of the celestial world were distributed into no less than three hundred and sixty-five heavens,[2] each inferior to the other. According to some of these systems, an Æon removed by many emanations from the source of Deity, and, in consequence, possessed of comparatively little strength, passed over the bounds of the Pleroma, and imparted life to matter. Another Power, called the *Demiurge*, was then produced, who, out of the materials already in existence, fashioned the present world. The human race, ushered, under such circumstances, upon the stage of time, are ignorant of the true God, and in bondage to corrupt matter. But all men are not in a state of equal degradation. Some possess a spiritual nature; some, a physical or animal nature; and some, only a corporeal or carnal nature. Jesus at length appeared; and, at His baptism in the Jordan, Christ, a powerful Æon, joined Him, that He might be fitted for redeeming souls from the ignorance and slavery in which they are entangled. This Saviour taught the human family the knowledge of the true God. Jesus was seized and led to

[1] See Tertullian, "Adversus Marcionem," lib. i., c. 2. About this time many works were written on the subject. Eusebius mentions a publication by Irenæus, "On Sovereignty, or on the Truth that *God is not the Author of Evil*," and another by Maximus on "*The Origin of Evil*." Euseb. v. 20, 27.

[2] Irenæus, "Contra Hæres." lib. i., c. 24, § 7.

crucifixion, and the Æon Christ now departed from Him but, as His body was composed of the finest ethereal elements, and was, in fact, a phantom, He did not really suffer on the accursed tree. Many of the Gnostics taught that there are two spheres of future enjoyment. They held that, whilst the spiritual natures shall be restored to the Pleroma, the physical or animal natures shall be admitted to an inferior state of happiness; and that such souls as are found to be incapable of purification shall be consigned to perdition or annihilation.

According to all the Gnostics, the Demiurge, or maker of this world, is far inferior to the Supreme Deity; but these system-builders were by no means agreed as to his position and his functions. Some of them regarded him as an Æon of inferior intelligence, who acted in obedience to the will of the Great God; others conceived that he was no other than the God of the Jews, who, in their estimation, was a Being of rugged and intractable character; whilst others contended that he was an Evil Power at open war with the righteous Sovereign of the universe. The Gnostics also differed in their views respecting matter. Those of them who were Egyptians, and who had been addicted to the study of the Platonic philosophy, held matter to be inert till impregnated with life; but the Syrians, who borrowed much from the Oriental theology, taught that it was eternally subject to a Lord, or Ruler, who had been perpetually at variance with the Great God of the Pleroma.

Two of the most distinguished Gnostic teachers who flourished in the early part of the second century were Saturninus of Antioch and Basilides of Alexandria.[1] Valentine, who was somewhat later, and who first excited attention at Rome about A.D. 140, was still more celebrated. He taught that in the Pleroma there are fifteen male and fifteen female Æons, whom he distinguished by their names; and he even proceeded to point out how they are distributed into married pairs. Some

[1] Irenæus, lib. i., c. 24. According to Clemens Alexandrinus, Basilides flourished in the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius. "Stromata," lib. vii., Opera, p. 764.

have supposed that certain deep philosophical truths were here concealed by him under the veil of allegory. As he, like others of the same class, conveyed parts of his Gnosis only into the ears of the initiated, the explanation of its symbols was reserved for those who were thus made acquainted with its secret wisdom. It has been alleged that he personified the attributes of God, and that the Æons, whom he names and joins together, are simply those divine perfections which, when combined, are fitted to produce the most remarkable results. Thus, he associated *Profundity* and *Thought*, *Intelligence* and *Truth*, *Reason* and *Life*.[1] His system had many attractions for his age, as his disciples, in considerable numbers, were soon found both in the East and in the West.

When Valentine was at Rome, Marcion, another heresiarch of the same class, was also in the great metropolis.[2] This man was born in Pontus, and though some of the fathers have attempted to fix a stain on his early reputation, his subsequent character was irreproachable.[3] He was one of the most upright and amiable of the Gnostics. These errorists were charged by their orthodox antagonists with gross immorality; and there was often too much ground for the accusation; for some of them, such as Carpocrates,[4] avowed and encouraged the most shameless licentiousness; but others, such as Marcion, were noted for their ascetic strictness. All the more respectable Gnostics recommended themselves to public confidence by the austerity of their discipline. They enjoined rigorous fasting, and inculcated abstinence from wine, flesh-meat, and marriage. The Oriental theology, as well as the Platonic philosophy, sanctioned such a mode of living; and, therefore, those by whom it was practiced were in a favorable position for gaining the public ear when they came forward as theological instructors.

[1] Βυθὸς καὶ ἔννοια, νοῦς καὶ ἀλήθεια, λόγος καὶ ζωή.

[2] According to some, Valentine was the disciple of Marcion. Clemens Alexandrinus states that Marcion was his senior. "Strom." lib. viii. Tertullian says expressly that Valentine was at one time the disciple of Marcion. "De Carne Christi," c. 1.

[3] See Neander's "General History," by Torrey, ii. pp. 171, 174, notes.

[4] See Kaye's "Clement of Alexandria," pp. 316, 317.

Gnosticism appears to us a most fantastic system; but, in the second century, it was dreaded as a very formidable adversary by the Church; and the extent to which it spread attests that it possessed not a few of the elements of popularity. Its doctrine of Æons, or Divine Emanations, was quite in accordance with theories which had then gained extensive currency; and its account of the formation of the present world was countenanced by established modes of thinking. Many who cherished a hereditary prejudice against Judaism were gratified by the announcement that the Demiurge was no other than the God of the Israelites; and many more were flattered by the statement that some souls are essentially purer and better than others.[1] The age was sunk in sensuality; and, as it was the great boast of the heresiarchs that their *Gnosis* secured freedom from the dominion of the flesh, multitudes, who secretly sighed for deliverance, were thus induced to test its efficacy. But Gnosticism, in whatever form it presented itself, was a miserable perversion of the Gospel. Some of its teachers entirely rejected the Old Testament; others reduced its history to a myth; and all mutilated and misinterpreted the writings of the apostles and evangelists. Like the Jewish Cabalists, who made void the law of God by expositions which fancy suggested and tradition embalmed, the Gnostics, by their far-fetched and unnatural comments, threw an air of obscurity over the plainest passages of the New Testament. Some of them, aware that they could derive no support from the inspired records, actually fabricated Gospels, and affixed to them the names of apostles or evangelists, in the hope of thus obtaining credit for the spurious documents.[2] Whilst Gnosticism in this way set aside the authority of the Word of God, it also lowered the dignity of the Saviour; and even when Christ was most favorably represented by it, He was but an Æon removed at the distance of

[1] The Ophites carried this feeling so far as to maintain that the serpent which deceived Eve was no other than the divine Æon Sophia, or Wisdom who thus weakened the power of Ialdabaoth, or the Demiurge.

[2] See Mosheim, "De Causis Suppositorum Librorum inter Christianos Sæculi Primi et Secundi." "Dissert. ad Hist. Eccl. Pertin." vol. i. 221.

several intermediate generations from the Supreme Ruler of the universe. The propagators of this system altogether misconceived the scope of the Gospel dispensation. They substituted salvation by carnal ordinances for salvation by faith; they represented man in his natural state rather as an ignoramus than a sinner; and, whilst they absurdly magnified their own Gnosis, they entirely discarded the doctrine of a vicarious atonement.

Shortly after the middle of the second century the Church began to be troubled by a heresy in some respects very different from Gnosticism. At that time the persecuting spirit displayed by Marcus Aurelius filled the Christians throughout the Empire with alarm, and those of them who were given to despondency began to entertain the most gloomy anticipations. An individual, named Montanus, who laid claim to prophetic endowments, now appeared in a village on the borders of Phrygia; and though he possessed a rather mean capacity, his discipline was so suited to the taste of many, and the predictions which he uttered so accorded with prevailing apprehensions, that he soon created a deep impression. When he first came forward in the character of a Divine Instructor he had been recently converted to Christianity; and he strangely misapprehended the nature of the Gospel. When he delivered his pretended communications from heaven, he wrought himself up into a state of frenzied excitement. His countrymen, who had been accustomed to witness the ecstasies of the priests of Bacchus and Cybele, saw proofs of a divine impulse in his bodily contortions; and some of them at once acknowledged his extraordinary mission. By means of two wealthy female associates, named Priscilla and Maximilla, who also professed to utter prophecies, Montanus was enabled rapidly to extend his influence. His fame spread abroad on all sides; and, in a few years, he had followers in Europe and Africa, as well as in Asia.

This heresiarch did not attempt to overturn the creed of the Church. He was neither a profound thinker nor a logical reasoner; and he certainly had not maturely studied the science of theology. But he possessed an ardent tempera-

ment, and he promulgated the suggestions of his own fanaticism as the dictates of inspiration. The doctrine of the personal reign of Christ during the millennium formed a prominent topic in his ministrations.[1] He maintained that the discipline of the Church had been left incomplete by the apostles, and that he was empowered to supply a better code of regulations. According to some he proclaimed himself the *Paraclete;* but, if so, he most grievously belied his assumed name, for his system was far better fitted to induce despondency than to inspire comfort. All his precepts were conceived in the sour and contracted spirit of mere ritualism. He insisted upon long fasts; condemned second marriages;[2] inveighed against all who endeavored to save themselves by flight in times of persecution; and asserted that such as had once been guilty of any heinous transgression should never again be admitted to ecclesiastical fellowship. Whilst he promulgated this stern discipline, he at the same time delivered the most dismal predictions, announcing, among other things, the speedy catastrophe of the Roman Empire. He also gave out that the Phrygian village where he ministered was to become the New Jerusalem of renovated Christianity.

But the Church was still too strongly impregnated with the free spirit of the Gospel to submit to such a prophet as Montanus. He had, however, powerful advocates, and even a Roman bishop at one time gave him countenance.[3] Though his discipline commended itself to the morose and pharisaical, it was rejected by those who rightly understood the mystery

[1] His great text was Rev. xx. 6, 7. Hence some now began to dispute the authority of the Apocalypse.

[2] Others, not connected with Montanus, but who lived about the same time, held the same views on the subject of marriage. Thus, Athenagoras says, "A second marriage is by us esteemed a specious adultery."—*Apology*, § 33.

[3] "Nam idem (Praxeas) tunc Episcopum Romanum, agnoscentem jam prophetias Montani, Priscæ, Maximillæ, et ex ea agnitione pacem ecclesiis Asiæ et Phrygiæ inferentem, falsa de ipsis prophetis et ecclesiis eorum adseverando et præcessorum ejus auctoritates defendendo coegit et litteras pacis revocare jam emissas et a proposito recipiendorum charismatum concessare."—*Tertullian, Adv. Praxean.*, c. i.

of godliness. Several councils were held to discuss its merits, and it was emphatically condemned.[1] The signal failure of some of the Montanist predictions had greatly lowered the credit of the party; Montanus was pronounced a false prophet; and though the sect was supported by Tertullian, the most vigorous writer of the age, it gradually ceased to attract notice.[2]

A century after the appearance of Montanus, another individual, in a more remote part of Asia, acquired great notoriety as a heresiarch. The doctrine of two First Principles, a good deity and an evil deity, had been long current in the East. Even in the days of Isaiah we trace its existence, for there is a most significant allusion to it in one of his prophecies, in which Jehovah is represented as saying, "I am the Lord, and there is *none else*, there is no God beside me. . . . . *I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil:* I the Lord do all these things."[3] About the fifth century before Christ, the Persian theology had been reformed by Zoroaster, and the subordination of the two Principles to one God, the author of both, had been acknowledged as an article of the established creed. In the early part of the third century of the Christian era, there was a struggle between the adherents of the old and the new faith of Parsism; and the supporters of the views of Zoroaster had been again successful. But a considerable party still refused to relinquish the doctrine of the independence of the two Principles; and some of these joined themselves to Mani, a Persian by birth, who, in the latter half of the third century, became distinguished as the propagator of a species of mongrel Christianity. This man, who was born about A.D. 240, possessed genius of a high order. Though he finished his career when he was only thirty-seven years of age, he had already risen to eminence among his countrymen, and attracted the notice of several successive

[1] Euseb. v. 16.

[2] It maintained, however, a lingering existence for several centuries. Even Justinian, about A.D. 530, enacts laws against the Montanists or Tertullianists.

[3] Isaiah xlv. 5, 7.

sovereigns. He was a skilful physician, an accomplished painter, and an excellent astronomer, as well as an acute metaphysician. Like Montanus, he laid claim to a divine commission, and alleged that he was the Paraclete who was promised to guide into all truth. He maintained that there are two First Principles of all things, light and darkness: God, in the kingdom of light, and the devil, in the kingdom of darkness, have existed from eternity. Mani thus accounted for the phenomena of the world around us: "Over the kingdom of light," said this heresiarch, "ruled God the Father, eternal in His sacred race, glorious in His might, the truth by His very essence. . . . . But the Father himself, glorious in His majesty, incomprehensible in His greatness, has united with Himself blessed and glorious Æons, in number and greatness surpassing estimation."[1] He taught that Christ came to liberate the light from the darkness, and that he himself was now deputed to reveal the mysteries of the universe, and to assist men in recovering their freedom. He rejected a great portion of the canon of Scripture, and substituted certain writings of his own, which his followers were to receive as of divine authority. His disciples, called Manichees, or Manichæans, assumed the name of a *Church*, and were divided into two classes, the *Elect* and the *Hearers*. The Elect, who were comparatively few, were the sacred order. They alone were made acquainted with the mysteries, or more recondite doctrines, of the sect; they practiced extreme abstinence; they subsisted chiefly upon olives;[2] and they lived in celibacy. They were not to kill, or even wound, an animal; neither were they to pull up a vegetable or pluck a flower. The Hearers were permitted to share in the business and pleasures of the world, but they were taught only the elements of the system. After death, according to Mani, souls do not pass immediately into the world of light. They must first undergo a twofold purification: one, by *water* in the moon; another, by *fire* in the sun.

[1] Augustin, "Contra Epist. Fundamenti," c. 13.

[2] On the ground that their oil is *the food of light!* Schaff's "History of the Christian Church," p. 249.

Mani had provoked the enmity of the Magians; and, at their instigation, he was consigned, about A.D. 277, by order of the Persian monarch, to a cruel and ignominious death. But the sect which he had organized did not die along with him. His system was well fitted to please the Oriental fancy; its promise of a higher wisdom to those who obtained admission into the class of the Elect encouraged the credulity of the auditors; and, to such as had not carefully studied the Christian revelation, its hypothesis of a Good and of an Evil Deity accounted rather plausibly for the mingled good and evil of our present existence. The Manichæans were exposed to much suffering in the country where they first appeared; and, as a sect of Persian origin, they were oppressed by the Roman government; but they were not extinguished by persecution, and, far down in the Middle Ages, they still occasionally figure in the drama of history.

Synods and councils may pass resolutions condemnatory of false doctrine, but it is more difficult to counteract the seduction of the principles from which heresies derive their influence. The Gnostics, the Montanists, and the Manichæans, owed much of their strength to fallacies and superstitions with which the Christian teachers of the age were not fully prepared to grapple; and hence it was that, whilst the errorists themselves were denounced by ecclesiastical authority, a large portion of their peculiar leaven found its way into the Church and gradually produced an immense change in its doctrine and discipline. A notice of the more important of the false sentiments and dangerous practices which the heretics propagated and the catholics adopted, may enable us to estimate the amount of the damage which the cause of truth now sustained.

The Montanists recognized the distinction of *venial* and *mortal* sins. They held that a professed disciple, guilty of what they called mortal sin, should never again be admitted to sealing ordinances.[1] It is apparent from the writings of

[1] Du Pin says that "Tertullian was the first that spoke distinctly of the distinction of great and little sins" (I., 286.) We find him, after he became a Montanist, dwelling on the distinction of venial and mortal sins. See Kaye's "Tertullian," pp. 255, 339.

Hippolytus, the famous bishop of Portus, that, in the early part of the third century, some of the most influential of the catholics cordially supported this principle. Soon afterward it was openly advocated by a powerful party in the Church of Rome, and its rejection by Cornelius, then at the head of that community, led to the schism of Novatian. But the distinction of venial and mortal sins, on which it proceeded, was even now generally acknowledged. This distinction, which lies at the basis of the ancient penitential discipline, was already beginning to vitiate the whole catholic theology. Some sins are more heinous than others, but the comparative turpitude of transgressions depends much on the circumstances in which they are committed. The wages of every sin is death,[1] and it is absurd to attempt to give a stereotyped character to any one violation of God's law by classing it, in regard to the extent of its guilt, in a particular category. Christianity regards sin, in whatever form, as a spiritual poison; and instead of seeking to solve the curious problem—how much of it may exist in the soul without the destruction of spiritual life?—it wisely instructs us to guard against it in our very thoughts, and to abstain from "all appearance of evil."[2] "When lust," or indwelling depravity of any description, "has conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."[3] The admission of the distinction of venial and mortal sins is most perilous to the best interests of the Christian community; for, whilst it is without foundation in the inspired statute-book, it inevitably leads to the neglect or careless performance of many duties which the Most High has solemnly enjoined.

The Platonic philosophy taught the necessity of a state of purification after death;[4] and a modification of this doctrine formed part of at least some of the systems of Gnosticism.[5] It is inculcated by Tertullian, the great champion of Montan-

[1] Rom. vi. 23. [2] 1 Thess. v. 22. [3] James i. 15.

[4] See Cudworth's "Intellectual System," with Notes by Mosheim, iii., p. 297. Edition, London, 1845.

[5] See Hagenbach's "History of Doctrines," i., p. 218.

ism;[1] and we have seen how, according to Mani, departed souls pass, first to the moon, and then to the sun, that they may thus undergo a twofold purgation. Here, again, a tenet originally promulgated by the heretics, became at length a portion of the creed of the Church. The Manichæans, as well as the Gnostics, rejected the doctrine of the atonement, and as faith in the perfection of the cleansing virtue of the blood of Christ declined, a belief in Purgatory became popular.[2]

The Gnostics, with some exceptions, insisted greatly on the mortification of the body; and the same species of discipline was strenuously recommended by the Montanists and the Manichæans. All these heretics believed that the largest measure of future happiness was to be realized by those who practiced the most rigid asceticism. Mani admitted that an individual without any extraordinary amount of abstinence could reach the world of Light, for he held out the hope of heaven to his Hearers; but he taught that its highest distinctions were reserved for the Elect, who scrupulously refrained from bodily indulgence. The Church silently adopted the same principle; and the distinction between *precepts* and *counsels*, which was soon introduced into its theology, rests upon this foundation. By precepts are understood those duties which are obligatory upon all; by counsels, those acts, whether of charity or abstinence, which are expected from such only as aim at superior sanctity.[3] The Elect of the Manichæans, as well as many of the Gnostics,[4] declined to enter into wedlock; and the Montanists were disposed to confer double honor on the single clergy.[5] The Church did not long stand out against the fascinations of this popular delusion. Her members almost universally caught up the impression

[1] See Kaye's "Tertullian," p. 348.

[2] The doctrine of Purgatory, as now held, was not, however, fully recognized until the time of Gregory the Great, or the beginning of the seventh century.

[3] See Mosheim's "Institutes," by Soames, i. 166.

[4] Marcion declined to baptize those who were married. "Non tinguitur apud illum caro, nisi virgo, nisi vidua, nisi cælebs, nisi divortio baptisma mercata."—*Tertullian, Adver. Marcionem*, lib. i., c. 29.

[5] See Neander's "General History," ii. 253.

that marriage stands in the way of the cultivation of piety; and bishops and presbyters, who lived in celibacy, began to be regarded as more holy than their brethren. This feeling continued to gain strength; and from it sprung that vast system of monasticism which spread throughout Christendom, with such amazing rapidity, in the fourth century.[1]

It thus appears that asceticism and clerical celibacy have been grafted on Christianity by paganism. Hundreds of years before the New Testament was written, Buddhism could boast of multitudes of monks and eremites.[2] The Gnostics, in the early part of the second century, celebrated the praises of a single life; and the Elect of the Manichæans were all celibates. Meanwhile marriage was permitted to the clergy of the catholic Church. Well might the apostle exhort the disciples to beware of those ordinances which have "*a show of wisdom* in will-worship, and humility, and *neglecting of the body*,"[3] as the austerities of the cloister are miserable preparatives for the enjoyments of a world of purity and love. Christianity exhibited startling tokens of degeneracy when it attempted to nourish piety upon the spawn of the heathen superstitions. The Gospel is designed for social and for active beings; as it hallows all the relations of life, it also teaches us how to use all the good gifts of God; and whilst celibacy and protracted fasting may only generate misanthropy and melancholy, faith, walking in the ways of obedience, can purify the heart, and induce the peace that passeth all understanding.

[1] In the fifth century, the great Augustine thus absurdly discourses of the merits of celibacy: "What is the meaning of the difference of fertility, let them ascertain who understand these things better than we do—whether the virginal life be in fruit an hundredfold, the widowed sixtyfold, the married thirtyfold—or whether the hundredfold fertility be ascribed to martyrdom, the sixtyfold to continence, the thirtyfold to marriage."—*De Sancta Virginitate*, cap. 45.

[2] In the *Westminster Review* for October, 1856, there is an article on "Buddhism," written, indeed, in the anti-evangelical spirit of that periodical, but containing withal much curious and important information. See also Sir James Emerson Tennent's "Ceylon," and Hardy's "Eastern Monachism."

[3] Col. ii. 23.

CHAPTER V.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH.

FOR some time after the apostolic age, the doctrine of the Church remained unchanged. Those who had been taught by the inspired heralds of the Gospel did not readily relinquish any of its distinctive principles. The purity of the evangelical creed was indeed soon deteriorated by the admixture of dogmas suggested by bigotry and superstition; but, throughout the whole of the period before us, its elementary articles were substantially maintained by almost all the Churches of the Empire.

Though there was still an agreement respecting the cardinal points of Christianity, it is not strange that the early writers occasionally expressed themselves in a way which would now be considered loose or inaccurate. Errorists, by the controversies they awakened, not unfrequently created much perplexity and confusion; but, in general, the truth eventually issued from discussion with renovated credit; for, in due time, acute and able advocates came forward to prove that the articles assailed rested on an impregnable foundation. During these debates it became necessary to distinguish the different shades of doctrine by the establishment of a fixed terminology. The disputants were obliged to define with precision the expressions they employed; and thus various forms of speech ceased to have an equivocal meaning. But, in the second or third century, theology had not assumed a scientific form; and the language of orthodoxy was, as yet, unsettled. Hence, when treating of doctrinal questions, those whose views were substantially correct sometimes gave their

sanction to the use of phrases which were afterward condemned as the symbols of heterodoxy.[1]

About the beginning of the third century all adults who were admitted to baptism were required to make a declaration of their faith by assenting to some such formula as that now called "The Apostles' Creed";[2] and though no general council had yet been held, the chief pastors of the largest and most influential Churches maintained, by letters, an official correspondence, and were in this way well acquainted with each other's sentiments. A considerable number of these epistles, or at least of extracts from them, are still extant;[3] and there is thus abundant proof of the unity of the faith of the ecclesiastical rulers. But, in treating of this subject, it is necessary to be more specific, and to notice particularly the leading doctrines commonly received.

Before entering directly on this review, it is proper to mention that the Holy Scriptures were held in the highest estimation. The reading of them aloud formed part of the stated service of the congregation, and one or other of the passages brought, at the time, under the notice of the auditory, usually constituted the groundwork of the preacher's discourse. Their perusal was recommended to the laity;[4] the husband and wife talked of them familiarly as they sat by

[1] The most remarkable instance of this is the condemnation of the word ὁμοούσιος, as applied to our Lord, by the Synod of Antioch in A.D. 269. It is well known that the very same word was adopted in A.D. 325, by the Council of Nice as the symbol of orthodoxy; and yet these two ecclesiastical assemblies held the same views. See also, as to the application of the word ὑπόστασις, Burton's "Ante-Nicene Testimonies," p. 129.

[2] "The inference to be drawn from a comparison of different passages scattered through Tertullian's writings is, that the Apostles' Creed in its present form was not known to him as a summary of faith; but that the various clauses of which it is composed were generally received as articles of faith by orthodox Christians."—*Kaye's Tertullian*, p. 324.

[3] These may be found in Routh's "Reliquiæ." Eusebius has preserved many of them.

[4] "Si quis legat Scripturas . . . . . et erit consummatus discipulus, et similis patrifamilias, qui de thesauro suo profert nova et vetera."—*Irenæus*, iv., c. 26, § i.

the domestic hearth ;[1] and children were accustomed to commit them to memory.[2] As many of the disciples could not read, and as the expense of manuscripts was considerable, copies of the sacred books were not in the hands of all ; but their frequent rehearsal in the public assemblies made the multitude familiar with their contents, and some of the brethren possessed an amount of acquaintance with them which, even at the present day, would be deemed marvellous. Eusebius speaks of several individuals who could repeat, at will, any required passage from either the Old or New Testament. On a certain occasion the historian happened to be present when one of these walking concordances poured forth the stores of his prodigious memory. "I was struck with admiration," says he, "when I first beheld him standing amidst a large crowd, and reciting certain portions of Holy Writ. As long as I could only hear his voice, I supposed that he was reading, as is usual in the congregations ; but, when I came close up to him, I discovered that, employing only the eyes of his mind, he uttered the divine oracles like some prophet."[3]

It was not extraordinary that the early Christians were anxious to treasure up Scripture in the memory ; for, in all matters of faith and practice, the Written Word was regarded as the standard of ultimate appeal. No human authority whatever was deemed equal to the award of this Divine arbiter. "They who are laboring after excellency," says a father of this period, "will not stop in their search after truth, *until they have obtained proof of that which they believe from the Scriptures themselves.*"[4] Nor was there any dispute as to the amount of confidence to be placed in the language of the Bible. The doctrine of its plenary inspiration—a doctrine

[1] "Ubi fomenta fidei de scripturarum interjectione?"—*Tertullian, Ad Uxorem*, lib. ii., c. 6.

[2] As in the case of Origen. In the "Didascalia" we meet with the following directions: "Teach then your children the word of the Lord. . . . . Teach them to write, and to read the Holy Scriptures."—*Ethiopic Didascalia, by Platt*, p. 130.

[3] Euseb. viii., c. 13. [4] Clemens Alexandrinus, "Stromata," lib. vii.

which many in modern times either openly or virtually deny—was received without abatement or hesitation. Even Origen, who takes such liberties when interpreting the sacred text, admits most fully that it is all of divine dictation. "I believe," says he, "that, for those who know how to draw virtue from the Scriptures, *every letter in the oracles of God has its end and its work*, even to an iota and particle of a letter. And, as among plants, there is not one but has its peculiar virtue, and as they only who have a knowledge of botanical science can tell how each should be prepared and applied to a useful purpose; so it is that he who is a holy and spiritual botanist of the Word of God, by gathering up each atom and element, will find the virtue of that Word, and acknowledge that there is nothing in all that is written that is superfluous." [1]

It has been already stated [2] that little difference of sentiment existed in the early Church respecting the books to be included in the canon of the New Testament. All, with the exception of the Gnostics and some other heretics, recognized the claims of the four Gospels,[3] of the Acts of the Apostles, of the Epistles of Paul, of the First Epistle of Peter, and of the First Epistle of John. Though, for a time, some Churches hesitated to acknowledge the remaining epistles, their doubts seem to have been gradually dissipated.[4] At first the genuineness of the Apocalypse was undisputed; but, after the rise of the Montanists, who were continually quoting it in proof of their theory of a millennium, some of their antagonists foolishly questioned its authority. At an early period two or three tracts [5] written by uninspired men were received as Scripture by a number of Churches. They were never, how-

[1] Homil. xxxix. on Jer. xliv. 22.

[2] Period i., sec. ii., chap, i., p, 163.

[3] The fathers traced analogies between the four Gospels and the four cardinal points, the living creatures with four faces, and the four rivers of Paradise. See Irenæus, lib. iii., c. xi., § 8; and Cyprian, Epist. lxxiii., Opera, p. 281.

[4] See Euseb. vi. 25.

[5] Such as the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas.

ever, generally acknowledged; and at length, by common consent, were excluded from the canon.[1]

The code of heathen morality supplied a ready apology for falsehood,[2] and its accommodating principles soon found too much encouragement within the pale of the Church. Hence the pious frauds which were now perpetrated. Various works made their appearance with the name of some apostolic man appended to them,[3] their fabricators thus hoping to give currency to opinions or practices which might otherwise have encountered much opposition. At the same time many evinced a disposition to supplement the silence of the Written Word by the aid of tradition. But though the writers of the period sometimes lay undue stress on the evidence of this vague witness, they often resort to it merely as an offset against statements professedly derived from the same source which were brought forward by the heretics; and they invariably admit that the authority of Scripture is entitled to override the authority of tradition. "The Lord in the Gospel, reproving and rebuking, declares," says Cyprian, "ye reject the commandment of God that ye may keep your own tradition.[4] . . . . Custom should not be an obstacle that the truth prevail not and overcome, for *a custom without truth is error inveterate*."[5] "What obstinacy is that, or what presumption, to prefer human tradition to divine ordinances, and not to perceive that God is displeased and provoked, as often as human tradition relaxes and sets aside the divine command."[6] During this period the uncertainty of any other guide than the inspired record was repeatedly demonstrated; for, though Christians were removed at so short a distance from apostolic times, the

See Westcott on the Canon, pp. 452, 453.

[2] "The opinion that falsehood was allowable, and might even be necessary to guide the multitude, was," says Neander, "a principle inbred into the aristocratic spirit of the old world."—*General History*, ii. p. 72.

[3] Such as the numerous works ascribed to Clemens Romanus and the Ignatian Epistles.

[4] Cyprian, Epist. lxxiv., p. 294.

[5] Cyprian, Epist. lxxiv., p. 296.

[6] Cyprian, Epist. lxxiv., p. 294.

traditions of one Church sometimes diametrically contradicted those of another.[1]

There is certainly nothing like uniformity in the language employed by the Christian writers of this era when treating of doctrinal subjects; and yet their theology was essentially the same. All apparently admit the corruption of human nature. Justin Martyr speaks of a concupiscence in every man, evil in all its tendencies and various in its nature,"[2] whilst Tertullian mentions original sin under the designation of "the vice of our origin."[3] Our first parent, says he, "having been seduced into disobedience by Satan, was delivered over to death, and transmitted his condemnation to the whole human race, which was *infected from his seed.*"[4] Though the ancient fathers occasionally describe free will in terms which apparently ignore the existence of indwelling depravity,[5] their language is not to be too strictly interpreted, as it only implies a strong protest against the heathen doctrine of fate, and a recognition of the principle that man is a voluntary agent. Thus it is that Clemens Alexandrinus, one of the writers who asserts most de-

[1] The conflicting traditions relative to the time of keeping the Paschal feast afford a striking illustration of this fact.

[2] See Kaye's "Justin Martyr," p. 75.

[3] "Originis vitium." "Malum igitur animæ .... ex originis vitio antecedit."—*De Anima*, c. 41. Cyprian calls it "contagio antiqua." "Innovati Spiritu Sancto a sordibus contagionis antiquæ."—*De Habitu Virginum*, cap. iv.

[4] "Per quem (Satanan) homo a primordio circumventus, ut præceptum Dei excederet, et propterea in mortem datus exinde totum genus de suo semine infectum suæ etiam damnationis traducem fecit."—*De Testimonio Animæ*, c. iii.

[5] "Nothing can be less systematic or less organized than their notions on this subject; I might say, often even contradictory; such inconsistency partly, perhaps, arising from the point never having been canvassed by men with any care, as it eventually was by controversialists of a later day, ... and partly from the embarrassment of their position; for whilst Scripture and self-experience compelled them to admit the grievous corruption of our nature, they had perpetually to contend against a powerful body of heretics, *who made such corruption the ground for affirming that a world so evil could not have been created by a good God, but was the work of a Demiurgus.*"—*Blunt's Early Fathers*, pp. 585, 586.

cidedly the freedom of the will, admits the necessity of a new birth unto righteousness. "The Father," says he, "regenerates by the Spirit unto adoption all who flee to Him."[1] "Since the soul is moved of itself, the grace of God demands from it that which it has, namely, a ready temper as its contribution to salvation. For the Lord wishes that *the good which He confers on the soul* should be its own, since it is not without sensation, so that it should be impelled like a body."[2]

No fact is more satisfactorily attested than that the early disciples rendered divine honors to our Saviour. In the very beginning of the second century, a heathen magistrate, who deemed it his duty to make minute inquiries respecting them, reported to the Roman Emperor that, in their religious assemblies, they sang "hymns to Christ as to a God."[3] They were reproached by the Gentiles, as well as by the Jews, for worshipping a man who had been crucified.[4] When this accusation was brought against them, they at once admitted its truth, and undertook to show that the act was perfectly capable of vindication.[5] In the days of Justin Martyr there were certain professing Christians, probably the Ebionites,[6] who held the simple humanity of our Lord, but that writer represents the great body of the disciples as entertaining very different sentiments. "There are some of our race," says he, "who confess that He was the Christ, but affirm that He was a man born of human parents, with whom I do not agree, neither should I, even if very many, who entertain the same

[1] "Pædagogue," lib. i.

[2] See Kaye's "Clement," p. 432. See also the comments of Neander, "General History," ii. 388.

[3] Pliny's Epistle to Trajan.

[4] See various passages in Justin's Dialogue with Trypho, and in Origen against Celsus.

[5] Thus Origen says, "We do not pay the *highest worship to Him who appeared so lately, as to a person who had no previous existence*, for we believe Him when He says Himself, 'Before Abraham was, I am.'"—*Contra Celsum*, viii., § 12.

[6] The origin of this name has been much controverted. It is probable that it was derived from Ebion, the founder of the sect. See Period i., sect. ii., chap. iii., p. 183. Among other things the party seem to have inculcated voluntary poverty.

opinion as myself, were to say so; since we are commanded by Christ to attend, not to the doctrines of men, but to that which was proclaimed by the blessed prophets, and taught by Himself."[1]

When Justin here expresses his dissent from those who described our Lord as "a man born of human parents," he obviously means that he is not a Humanitarian; for, in common with the early Church, he held the doctrine of the two natures in Christ. The fathers who now flourished, when touching on the question of the union of humanity and deity in the person of the Redeemer, do not, it is true, express themselves always with as much precision as writers who appeared after the Eutychian controversy in the fifth century; but they undoubtedly believed that our Lord was both God and man.[2] Even already the subject was pressed on their attention by various classes of errorists who were laboring with much assiduity to disseminate their principles. The Gnostics, who affirmed that the body of Jesus was a phantom, shut them up to the necessity of showing that He really possessed all the attributes of a human being; whilst, in meeting objectors from a different quarter, they were compelled to demonstrate that He was also the Jehovah of the Old Testament. The Ebionites were not the only sectaries who taught that Jesus was a mere man. The same doctrine was inculcated by Theodotus, a native of Byzantium, who settled at Rome about the end of the second century. This individual, though by trade a tanner, possessed no small amount of learning, and created some disturbance in the Church of the Western capital by the novelty and boldness of his speculations. In the end he was

[1] This passage, which is somewhat obscure as it stands in the original, has been misinterpreted by Unitarian writers from generation to generation. The rendering which they commonly give of it makes it quite inconsistent with the context, and with the statements of Justin elsewhere. See Kaye's "Justin," p. 51.

[2] Thus Tertullian says, "The only *man* without sin is Christ, because Christ is *also God*."—*De Anima*, cap. xli. Justin Martyr complains that the Jews had expunged from the Septuagint many passages "wherein it might be clearly shown that He who was crucified was *both God and man*."—*Dialogue with Trypho*, § 71.

excommunicated by Victor, the Roman bishop. Some time afterward his sentiments were adopted by Artemon, whose disciples, named Artemonites, elected a bishop of their own,[1] and existed for some time at Rome as a distinct community.

But by far the most distinguished of these ancient impugners of the proper deity of the Messiah was the celebrated Paul of Samosata, who flourished shortly after the middle of the third century. Paul occupied the bishopric of Antioch, the second see in Christendom; and was undoubtedly a man of superior talent. According to his views, the Divine Logos is not a distinct Person, but the Reason of God; and Jesus was the greatest of the sons of men, simply because the Logos dwelt in Him after a higher manner, or more abundantly, than in any other of the posterity of Adam.[2] But though this prelate had great wealth, influence, and eloquence, his heterodoxy soon raised a storm of opposition which he could not withstand. The Christians of Antioch in the third century refused to tolerate the ministrations of a preacher who insinuated that the Word is not truly God. He possessed consummate address, and when first arraigned, his plausible equivocations and sophistries imposed upon his judges; but, at a subsequent council, held about A.D. 269 in the metropolis of Syria, he was so closely pressed by Malchion, one of his own presbyters, that he was obliged reluctantly to acknowledge his real sentiments. He was, in consequence, deposed from his office by a unanimous vote of the Synod. A circular letter[3] announcing the decision was transmitted to the leading pastors of the Church all over the Empire, and this ecclesiastical deliverance received their universal sanction.[4]

The theological term translated *Trinity*[5] was in use as early

[1] Euseb. v. 28.

[2] Euseb. v. 27, 30. Epiphanius, "Hær." 65, 1.

[3] The superscription of this epistle is a sufficient refutation of much of the reasoning of Mr. Shepherd against the genuineness of the Cyprianic correspondence, as here the names of a crowd of bishops are given without any mention whatever of their sees. See also Euseb. x. 5, p. 391, Edit. Vales, 1672.

[4] Euseb. vii. 30.

[5] τριὰς or *trinitas*.

as the second century; for, about A.D. 180, it is employed by Theophilus, who is supposed to have been one of the predecessors of Paul of Samosata in the Church of Antioch.[1] Speaking of the formation of the heavenly bodies on the fourth day of creation, as described in the first chapter of Genesis, this writer observes: "The three days which preceded the luminaries are *types of the Trinity*,[2] of God, and His Word, and His Wisdom." Here, as elsewhere in the works of the fathers of the early Church, the third person of the Godhead is named under the designation of Wisdom.[3] Though this is the first mention of the word Trinity to be found in any ecclesiastical document now extant, it is plain that the doctrine is of far higher antiquity. Justin Martyr repeatedly refers to it, and Athenagoras, who flourished in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, treats of it with much clearness. "We speak," says he, "of the Father as God, and the Son as God, and the Holy Ghost, showing at the same time their power in unity, and their distinction in order."[4] "We who look upon this present life as worth little or nothing, and are conducted through it by the sole principle of knowing God and the Word proceeding from Him, of knowing what is the unity of the Son with the Father, what the Father communicates to the Son, what is the Spirit, *what is the union of this number of Persons*, the Spirit, the Son, and the Father, and in what way they who are united are divided—shall we not have credit given us for being worshippers of God?"[5]

The attempts made in the latter half of the second century to pervert the doctrine of Scripture relative to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, probably led to the appearance of the

[1] This is, however, by no means clear, as there is nothing in his works to indicate that he held such a position.

[2] "Ad Autolycum," ii., c. 15. *τύποι εἰσιν τῆς Τριάδος.*

[3] Thus Irenæus says: "There is ever present with Him (the Father) the Word and *Wisdom*, the Son and *Spirit*."—*Contra Hæreses*, iv. 20, § 1. It may here be proper to add that the early Christians worshipped the third person of the Trinity. Thus, Hippolytus says: "Through Him (the Incarnate Word) we form a conception of the Father; we believe in the Son; *we worship the Holy Ghost*."—*Contra Noetum*, c. 12.

[4] "Legat. pro Christianis," c. 10. [5] "Legat. pro Christianis," c. 12.

word Trinity in the ecclesiastical nomenclature; for, when controversy commenced, some such symbol was required to prevent the necessity of constant and tedious circumlocution. One of the most noted of the parties, dissatisfied with the ordinary mode of speaking respecting the Three Divine Persons, and desirous of changing the current creed, was Praxeas, a native of Asia Minor. After having acquired much credit by his fortitude and courage in a time of persecution, he had also signalized himself by his zeal against the Montanists. He now taught that the Son and Holy Ghost are not distinct Persons, but simply modes or energies of the Father; and as those who adopted his sentiments imagined that they thus held more strictly than others the doctrine of the existence of a single Ruler of the universe, they styled themselves *Monarchians*.[1] According to their views the first and second Persons of the Godhead are identical; and, as it apparently followed from this theory, that the Father suffered on the cross, they received the name of *Patripassians*.[2] Praxeas travelled from Asia Minor to Rome, and afterward passed over into Africa, where he was strenuously opposed by the famous Tertullian. Another individual, named Noetus, attracted some notice about the close of the second century by the peculiarity of his speculations in reference to the Godhead. "Noetus," says a contemporary, "calls the same both Son and Father, for he speaks thus: 'When the Father had not been born, He was rightly called Father, but when it pleased Him to undergo birth, then by birth He became the Son of Himself, and not of another.' Thus he professes to establish the principle of Monarchianism."[3] But, perhaps, the attempts of Sabellius to modify the established doctrine made the deepest impression. This man, who was an ecclesiastic connected with Ptolemais in Africa,[4] maintained that there is no foundation for the ordinary distinction of the Persons of the Trinity, and that the

[1] "Monarchiam, inquiunt, tenemus."—*Tertullian, Adv. Praxean*, c. 3.

[2] "Athanas. de Synodis," c. 7.

[3] Hippolytus, "Philosophumena," book ix.

[4] He flourished about A.D. 220, and was contemporary with Hippolytus. See Bunsen, i. 131.

terms Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, merely indicate different manifestations of the Supreme Being, or different phases under which the one God reveals Himself. From him the doctrine of those who confound the Persons of the Godhead still bears the name of Sabellianism.

It has been sometimes said that the Church borrowed its idea of a Trinity from Plato, but this assertion rests upon no historical basis. Learned men have found it exceedingly difficult to give anything like an intelligible account of the Trinity of the Athenian philosopher,[1] and it had only a metaphysical existence. It certainly had nothing more than a fanciful and verbal resemblance to the Trinity of Christianity. Had the doctrine of the Church been derived from the writings of the Grecian sage, it would not have been inculcated with so much zeal and unanimity by the early fathers. Some of them were bitterly opposed to Platonism, and yet, though none denounced it more vehemently than Tertullian,[2] we can not point to any one of them who speaks of the Three Divine Persons more clearly or copiously. The heretic thinks, says he, "that we can not believe in one God in any other way than if we say that the very same Person is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. . . . . These persons assume the number and arrangement of the Trinity to be a division of the Unity; whereas the Unity, which derives a Trinity from itself, is not destroyed by it, but has its different offices performed. They, therefore, boast that two and three Gods are preached by us, but that they themselves are worshippers of one God; as if the Unity, when improperly contracted, did not create heresy, and a Trinity, when properly considered, did not constitute truth."[3]

Every one at all acquainted with the ecclesiastical literature of this period must acknowledge that the disciples firmly

[1] Hermias speaks of the Trinity of Plato as "God, and matter, and example."—Sec. 5.

[2] "Doleo bona fide Platonem omnium hæreticorum condimentarium factum. . . . . Cum igitur hujusmodi argumento illa insinuentur a Platone quæ hæretici mutuantur, satis hæreticos repercutiam, si argumentum Platonis elidam."—*De Anima*, c. 23.

[3] "Adversus Praxeam," c. 2, 3.

maintained the doctrine of the Atonement. The Gnostics and the Manichæans discarded this article from their systems, as it was entirely foreign to the spirit of their philosophy; but, though the Church teachers enter into scarcely any explanation of it, by attempting to show how the violated law required a propitiation, they proclaim it as a glorious truth which should inspire all the children of God with joy and confidence. Clemens Alexandrinus gives utterance only to the common faith when he declares, "Christians are redeemed from corruption by the blood of the Lord." "The Word poured forth His blood for us to save human nature." "The Lord gave Himself a victim for us."[1] The early writers also mention faith as the means by which we are to appropriate the benefits of the Redeemer's sacrifice. Thus, Justin Martyr represents Christ as "purifying by His blood those who believe on Him."[2] Clemens Alexandrinus, in like manner, speaks of "the one mode of salvation by faith in God,"[3] and says that "we have believed in God through *the voice of the Word*."[4] In the "Letter to Diognetus" the doctrine of justification by faith through the imputed righteousness of the Saviour is beautifully exhibited. "For what else," says the writer, "could cover our sins but His righteousness? In whom was it possible that we, the lawless and the unholy, could be justified, save by the Son of God alone? Oh sweet exchange! oh unsearchable wisdom! oh unexpected benefits! that the sin of many should be hidden by One righteous, and the righteousness of One justify many sinners."[5]

The Church of the second and third centuries was not agitated by any controversies relative to grace and predestination. Few were disposed to indulge in speculations on these subjects; and some of the ecclesiastical writers, in the heat of controversial discussion, are occasionally tempted to make use of language which it is difficult to reconcile with the declarations of the New Testament. All of them, however, either explicitly or virtually, admit the necessity of grace; and some distinctly

[1] "Pædagogue," book i., c. 5, 6, 11.
[2] Opera, p. 74.
[3] "Pædagogue," book i., c. 1.
[4] "Stromata," book ii.
[5] Justin, Opera, p. 500.

enunciate the doctrine of election. "We stand in especial need of divine grace, and right instruction, and pure affection," says Clemens Alexandrinus, "and *we require that the Father should draw us toward Himself.*" "God, who knows the future as if it was already present, *knows the elect according to His purpose* even before the creation."[1] "Your power to do," says Cyprian, "will be according to the increase of spiritual grace. . . . . What measure we bring thither of faith to hold, so much do we drink in of grace to inundate. Hereby is strength given."[2] It is worthy of note that those writers who speak most decidedly of the freedom of the will, also most distinctly proclaim their faith in the perfection of the Divine Sovereignty. Thus, Justin Martyr urges, as a decisive proof of the impious character of their theology, that the heathen philosophers repudiated the doctrine of a particular providence;[3] and all the ancient fathers are ever ready to recognize the superintending guardianship of God in the common affairs of life.

But though the creed of the Church was still to some extent substantially sound, it was beginning to suffer much from adulteration. One hundred years after the death of the Apostle John, spiritual darkness was fast settling down upon the Christian community; and the fathers, who flourished toward the commencement of the third century, frequently employ language for which they would have been sternly rebuked, had they lived in the days of the apostles and evangelists. Thus, we find them speaking of "sins *cleansed* by repentance,"[4] and of repentance as "*the price* at which the Lord has determined to grant forgiveness."[5] We read of

[1] See Kaye's "Clement," pp. 431, 435.

[2] Epist. i. ad Donatum, Opera, p. 3.

[3] The philosophers, according to Justin, maintained a general, but denied a particular providence. Dial. with Trypho, Opera, p. 218. Some who call themselves Christians adopt this portion of the pagan theology.

[4] "Non facti solum, verum et voluntatis delicta vitanda, et pœnitentia purganda esse."—*Tertullian, De Pœnitentia*, c. iii.

[5] "Hoc enim pretio Dominus veniam addicera instituit."—*Tert. De Pœnit.*, c. vi.

"*sins cleansed* by alms and faith,"[1] and of the martyr, by his sufferings, "washing away his own iniquities."[2] We are told that by baptism "we are cleansed from all our sins," and "regain that Spirit of God which Adam received at his creation and lost by his transgression."[3] "The pertinacious wickedness of the Devil," says Cyprian, "has power *up to the saving water*, but in baptism he loses all the poison of his wickedness."[4] The same writer insists on the necessity of *penance*, a species of discipline unknown to the Apostolic Church, and denounces, with terrible severity, those who discouraged its performance. "By the deceitfulness of their lies," says he, they interfere, "that *satisfaction* be not given to God in His anger. . . . . All pains are taken that *sins be not expiated by due satisfactions and lamentations*, that wounds be not washed clean by tears."[5] It may be said that some of these expressions are rhetorical, and that those by whom they were employed did not mean to deny the all-sufficiency of the Great Sacrifice; but had these fathers clearly apprehended the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, they would have recoiled from the use of language so exceedingly objectionable.

There are many who imagine that, had they lived in the days of Tertullian or of Origen, they must have enjoyed spiritual advantages far higher than any to which they have now access. But a more minute acquaintance with the ecclesiastical history of the third century should convince them that they have no reason to complain of their present privileges. The amount of material light which surrounds us does not depend on our proximity to the sun. When our planet is most remote from its great luminary, we may bask in the splendor of his effulgence; and, when it approaches nearer, we may be involved in thick darkness. So it is with the

[1] Clemens Alexandrinus, "Strom." book vi.

[2] "Sufficiat martyri propria delicta purgasse."—*Tertullian, De Pudicitia*, c. 22.

[3] See Kaye's "Tertullian," p. 431. Origen speaks of the baptism of blood (martyrdom) rendering us purer than the baptism of water. Opera, ii., p. 473.

[4] Epist. lxxvi., Opera, p. 322.

[5] Epist. lv., p. 181.

Church. The amount of our religious knowledge does not depend on our proximity to the days of primitive Christianity. The Bible is the sun of the spiritual firmament; and this divine illuminator, like the glorious orb of day, pours forth its light with equal brilliancy from generation to generation. The Church may retire into "chambers of imagery" erected by her own folly; and there, with the light shut out from her, may sink into a slumber disturbed only, now and then, by some dream of superstition; or, with the light still shining on her, her eye may be dim or disordered, and she may stumble at noonday. But the light is as pure as in the days of the apostles; and, if we have eyes to profit by it, we may "understand more than the ancients." The art of printing has supplied us with facilities for the study of the Scriptures which were denied to the fathers of the second century; and the ecclesiastical documents, relative to that age, which have been transmitted to us from antiquity, contain, perhaps, the greater part of even the traditionary information which was preserved in the Church. If we are only "taught of God," we are in as good a position for acquiring a correct acquaintance with the way of salvation as was Polycarp or Justin Martyr. What an encouragement for every one to pray, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me!"[1]

[1] Ps. cxix. 18, 19.

SECTION III.

THE WORSHIP AND CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH.

THE religion of the primitive Christians seemed exceedingly strange to their pagan contemporaries. The heathen worship was little better than a solemn show. Its victims adorned with garlands, its incense and music and lustral water, its priests arrayed in white robes, and its marble temples with gilded roofs, were fitted, rather to fascinate the senses, than to improve the heart or expand the intellect. Even the Jewish ritual, in the days of its glory, had a powerful effect on the imagination. As the Israelites assembled from all quarters at their great festivals—as they poured in thousands and tens of thousands into the courts of their ancient sanctuary—as they surveyed the various parts of a structure which was one of the wonders of the world—as they beheld the priests in their holy garments—as they listened to the mingled strains of vocal and instrumental harmony—and as they gazed on the high-priest himself, whose forehead glittered with gold whilst his breastplate sparkled with precious stones, they felt that they witnessed a scene of extraordinary splendor. But, when Christianity made its appearance in the world, it presented none of these attractions. Its adherents were stigmatized as atheists,[1] because they had no altars, no temples, and no sacrifices. They held their meetings in private dwellings; their ministers wore no peculiar dress; and, by all who sought merely the gratifica-

[1] See the Apology of Athenagoras, secs. 3, 10; and Minucius Felix, c. 10.

tion of the eye or of the ear, the simple service in which they engaged was considered very bald and uninteresting. But they rejoiced exceedingly in its spiritual character, as they felt that they thus drew near to God, and held sweet and refreshing communion with their Father in heaven.

During a considerable part of the second century, the Christians had comparatively few buildings set apart for public worship. At a time when they congregated to celebrate the rites of their religion at night or before break of day, they were not anxious to obtrude their conventicles on the notice of their persecutors. But as they increased in numbers, and as the State became somewhat more indulgent, they gradually acquired confidence; and, in the beginning of the third century, the form of their ecclesiastical structures was already familiar to the eyes of the heathen.[1] Shortly after that period, their meeting-houses in Rome were well known; and, in the reign of Alexander Severus, they ventured to dispute with one of the city trades the possession of a piece of ground on which they were desirous to erect a place of worship.[2] When the case came for adjudication before the Imperial tribunal, the sovereign decided in their favor, and thus virtually placed them under the shield of his protection. When the Emperor Gallienus, in A.D. 260, issued an edict of toleration, church architecture advanced apace, and many of the old buildings, which were falling into decay, were superseded by edifices at once more capacious and more tasteful. The Christians at this time began to emulate the magnificence of the heathen temples, and even to ape their arrangements. Thus it is that some of our churches at the present day are nearly fac-similes of the ancient religious edifices of paganism.[3]

In addition to the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, the worship of the early Church consisted of singing, prayer, reading the Scriptures, and preaching. In the earliest notice of the Christians of the second century which occurs in

[1] "Nostræ columbæ etiam domus simplex, in editis semper et apertis, et ad lucem."—*Tertullian, Advers. Valent.*, c. 3.

[2] Life of Alexander Severus, by Lampridius, c. 49.

[3] See Kennett's "Antiquities of Rome," p. 41.

any pagan writer, their psalmody, with which they commenced their religious services,[1] is particularly mentioned; for, in his celebrated letter to the Emperor Trajan, Pliny states that they met together, before the rising of the sun, to "sing hymns to Christ as to a God." It is probable that some of the "hymns" here spoken of were the Psalms of the Old Testament. Many of these inspired effusions celebrate the glories of Immanuel; and as, for obvious reasons, the Messianic Psalms would be used more frequently than any others, it is not strange that the disciples are represented as assembling to sing praise to Christ. But the Church at this time was not confined to the ancient Psalter. Hymns of human composition were occasionally employed;[2] and one of these, to be found in the writings of Clement of Alexandria,[3] was, perhaps, sung in the early part of the third century by the Christians of the Egyptian capital. Influential bishops sometimes introduced them by their own authority, but the practice awakened suspicion, and was considered irregular. Hence Paul of Samosata, in the Council of Antioch, held A.D. 269, was blamed for discontinuing the Psalms formerly used, and for establishing a new and very exceptionable hymnology.[4]

In the early Church the whole congregation joined in the singing,[5] but instrumental music did not accompany the praise. In the secret assemblies of the faithful its employment would have been inexpedient and unseasonable, as it would only have increased unnecessarily the perils of a proscribed community.

[1] Bingham has proved, by a variety of testimonies, that such was the order of the ancient service. See his "Origines," iv. 383, 406, 417. The early Christians thus literally obeyed the commandment, "Come before his presence with singing"; "*Enter into his gates* with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise."—(Ps. c. 2, 4).

[2] See 1 Cor. xiv. 26. See also Euseb. v. 28.

[3] At the end of his "Pædagogue." This hymn to the Saviour was composed by Clement himself. The 59th Canon of the Council of Laodicea forbids the use of "private psalms" in public worship. By "private psalms" the ancient interpreters understand psalms composed by private individuals and not adopted by the church. The Council of Laodicea was held about A.D. 360.

[4] Euseb. vii. 30.

[5] See Bingham i., p. 383. Edit. London, 1840.

After ages of disuse, it became associated, in the minds of the disciples, with the superannuated ritual of the Jews, or the noisy orgies of the heathen; so that on the advent of more prosperous times, when it might have been practiced without danger, the members of the Church generally felt little inclination to encourage it, knowing that it might give offence as a deviation from their long-established form of service. Early in the third century Clemens Alexandrinus admits[1] that the music of the harp or lyre might be used without blame in the private devotional exercises of the Christians; but he looked with disfavor on its introduction into the congregational worship.

The account of the worship of the Church, given by a Christian writer who flourished about the middle of the second century, is exceedingly instructive. "On the day which is called Sunday," says Justin Martyr, "there is a meeting together in one place of all who dwell either in towns or in the country; and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as the time permits. When the reading ceases, the president delivers a discourse, in which he makes an application and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. We then rise all together and pray. Then . . . . when we cease from prayer, bread is brought, and wine and water; and the president, in like manner, offers up prayers and thanksgivings according to his ability;[2] and the people express their assent by saying Amen."[3] It is abundantly clear from this statement that the presiding minister was not restricted to any set form of supplication. As he prayed "according to his ability," his petitions could neither have been dictated by others nor taken from a liturgy. Such a practice as the *reading* of prayers was, indeed, totally unknown in the Church during the first three centuries. Hence Tertullian represents the Christians of his generation as praying "*looking up* with hands spread open, ... and *without a prompter*, be-

[1] "Pædag." ii. 4.

[2] ὅση δύναμις. See Origen, "Contra Celsum," iii. 1 and 57; Opera, i. 447, 485.

[3] "Apol." ii., p. 98.

cause from the heart."[1] In his "Treatise on Prayer" Origen recommends the worshipper to address God with stretched-out hands and uplifted eyes.[2] The erect body with the arms extended was supposed to represent the cross,[3] and therefore this attitude was deemed peculiarly appropriate for devotion.[4] On the Lord's day the congregation always *stood* when addressing God.[5] At this period forms of prayer were used in the heathen worship,[6] and in some cases the pagans adhered with singular tenacity to their ancient liturgies;[7] but the Church did not

[1] "Suspicientes Christiani manibus expansis denique sine monitore, quia de pectore oramus."—*Apol.* c. 30. The omission of a single word, when repeating the heathen liturgy, was considered a great misfortune. Chevallier says, speaking of this expression *sine monitore*, "There is probably an allusion to the persons who were appointed, at the sacrifices of the Romans, to *prompt the magistrates*, lest they should incidentally omit *a single word* in the appropriate formulæ, which would have vitiated the whole proceedings."—*Translation of the Epistles of Clement*, etc., p. 411, note. Among the heathen, the practice of repeating after the minister was connected with the use of a liturgy. "After sacrificing, the augur offered a prayer for the desired signs to appear, *repeating after an inferior minister a set form.*"—*Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, Art. Auspicium.

[2] Opera i., 267.

[3] See Minucius Felix.

[4] Tertullian, "De Oratione," c. 14.

[5] See Bingham, iv. 324. In prayer the Christians soon began to turn the face to the east. See Tertullian, "Apol." c. 16. This custom was borrowed from the Eastern nations who worshipped the sun. See Kaye's "Tertullian," p. 408.

[6] Thus Prideaux mentions how the Persian priests, long before the commencement of our era, approached the sacred fire "to read *the daily offices of their Liturgy* before it."—*Connections*, part i., book iv., vol. i., p. 218. This liturgy was composed by Zoroaster nearly five hundred years before Christ's birth. See also Rawlinson's "Herodotus," ii. 85, where the sacred scribe is said to "read from a papyrus certain prayers in presence of the assembled *pastophori*, or members of the Sacred College."

[7] See Clarkson on "Liturgies," and Hartung, "Religion der Romer." It is remarkable that the old pagan Roman liturgy, in consequence of the change in the language from the time of its original establishment, began at length to be almost unintelligible to the people. It thus resembles the present Romish Liturgy. The pagans believed that their prayers were more successful when offered up in a barbarous and unknown language. See Potter's "Antiquities of Greece," i. 288. Edit. Edinburgh, 1818. The Lacedæmonians had a form of prayer from which they never varied either in public or private. Potter, i. 281.

yet require the aid of such auxiliaries. Though in the account of the losses sustained during the Diocletian persecution, we read frequently of the seizure of the Scriptures, and of the ecclesiastical utensils, we never meet with any allusion to the spoliation of prayer-books.[1] There is, in fact, no evidence whatever that such helps to devotion were yet in existence.[2]

The worship was conducted in a dialect understood by the congregation; and though the officiating minister was at perfect liberty to select his phraseology, he did not think it necessary to aim at great variety in the mere language of his devotional exercises. So long as a petition was deemed suitable, it continued to be repeated in nearly the same words, whilst providential interpositions, impending persecutions, and the personal condition of the flock were continually suggesting fresh topics for thanksgiving, supplication, and confession. The beautiful and comprehensive prayer taught by our Lord to His disciples was never considered out of place; and, as early as the third century, it was, at least in some districts, used once at every meeting of the faithful.[3] The apostle had taught the brethren that intercessions should be made "for kings and for all that are in authority,"[4] and the primitive disciples did not neglect to commend their earthly rulers to the care of the Sovereign of the universe.[5] But still it is clear that even such petitions did not run in the channel of any prescribed formulary.

From the very days of the apostles the reading of the Scriptures constituted an important part of public worship. This portion of the service was at first, perhaps, conducted by one of the elders, but, in some places, toward the close of the

[1] "In the persecutions under Diocletian and his associates, though a strict inquiry was made after the books of Scripture, and other things belonging to the Church, which were often delivered up by the *Traditores* to be burnt, yet we never read of any ritual books, or books of divine service, delivered up among them."—*Bingham*, iv. 187.

[2] In modern times, when there is any great revival of religion, forms of prayer fall into comparative desuetude even among those by whom they were formerly used.

[3] See Tertullian, "De Oratione," c. 9; and Origen, "De Oratione."

[4] 1 Tim. ii. 2.

[5] Tertullian, "Apol." c. 39.

second century, it was committed to a new official, called the Reader.[1] The presiding minister was permitted originally to choose whatever passages he considered most fitting for the occasion, as well as to determine the amount of time to be occupied in the exercise; but, at length, an order of lessons was prepared, and then the Reader was expected to confine himself to the Scriptures pointed out in his calendar.[2] This arrangement, designed to secure a more uniform attention to the several parts of the inspired canon, came only gradually into general operation; and it frequently happened that the order of lessons for one church was very different from that used in another.[3]

Whilst the constant reading, in the vernacular tongue, of considerable portions of Scripture at public worship, promoted the religious instruction of the people, the mode of preaching which prevailed contributed to make them still more intimately acquainted with the sacred records. The custom of selecting a text as the basis of a discourse had not yet been introduced; but when the reading closed, the minister proceeded to expatiate on that section of the Word just brought under the notice of the congregation, and pointed out, as well the doctrines it recognized, as the practical lessons it inculcated. The entire presbytery was usually present in the congregation every Lord's day, and when one or other of the elders had made a few comments[4] the president added some remarks of an expository and hortatory character; but, frequently, he received no assistance in this part of the service. The method of reading and elucidating the Scripture now pursued, was eminently salutary; for, whilst it stored the memory with a large share of biblical knowledge, the whole Word of God, in the way of earnest appeal, was brought into close contact with the heart and conscience of each individual.

[1] See Tertullian, "De Præscrip." c. 41.

[2] See Guerike's "Manual of the Antiquities of the Church," by Morrison, p. 214.

[3] Guerike's "Manual," p. 213.

[4] There is reference to this in the "Apostolic Constitutions," lib. ii., c. 57 Cotelerius, i. 266.

So long as pristine piety flourished, the people listened with devout attention to the observations of the preacher; but, as a more secular spirit prevailed, he began to be treated rather as an orator, than a herald from the King of kings. Before the end of the third century, the house of prayer occasionally resounded with the plaudits of the theatre. Such exhibitions were, indeed, condemned at the time by the ecclesiastical authorities, but the very fact that in the principal church of one of the chief cities of the Empire, the bishop, as he proceeded with his sermon, was greeted with stamping of feet, clapping of hands, and waving of handkerchiefs,[1] supplied melancholy evidence of the progress of spiritual degeneracy. In the days of the Apostle Paul such demonstrations would have been universally denounced as unseemly and unseasonable.

During the first three centuries there was nothing in the ordinary costume of a Christian minister to distinguish him from any of his fellow-citizens;[2] but when the pastor officiated in the congregation, he began, at an early date, to wear some peculiar piece of apparel. In an old document, purporting to have been written shortly after the middle of the second century, he is described, at the period of his advancement to the episcopal chair, as "clothed with the dress of the bishops."[3] As the third century advanced, there was a growing disposition to increase the pomp of public worship; in some places vessels of silver or of gold were used at the dispensation of the Lord's Supper;[4] and, about this time, some few decorations were assumed by those who took part in its administration.[5] But still the habit used by ecclesiastics at divine service was distinguished by its comparative simplicity, and differed very little from the dress commonly worn by the mass of the population.

What a change passed over the Church from the period before us to the dawn of the Reformation! Now, the making

[1] Euseb. vii. 30.

[2] See Bingham, ii 212.

[3] Letter from Pius of Rome to Justus of Vienne.

[4] Bingham, ii. 451.

[5] They were certainly known soon afterward. See the introduction to the "Address to Paulinus of Tyre," Euseb. x. 4.

of images was forbidden, and no picture was permitted even on the walls of the sacred edifice:[1] then a church frequently suggested the idea of a studio, or a picture gallery. Now, the whole congregation joined heartily in the psalmody: then, the mute crowd listened to the music of the organ accompanied by the shrill voices of a chorus of thoughtless boys. Now, prayers, in the vernacular tongue and suited to the occasion, were offered with simplicity and earnestness: then, petitions, long since antiquated, were muttered in a dead language. Now, the Word was read and expounded in a way intelligible to all: then, a few Latin extracts from it were mumbled over hastily; and, if a sermon followed, it was, perhaps, a eulogy on some wretched fanatic, or an attack on some true evangelist. There are writers who believe that the Church was meanwhile going on in a career of hopeful development; but facts too clearly testify that she was moving backwards in a path of cheerless declension. Now, the Church "holding forth the Word of life" was commending herself to philosophers and statesmen: then, she had sunk into premature dotage, and her very highest functionaries were lisping the language of infidelity.

[1] See Period ii., sec. i., chap iii., p. 289.

CHAPTER II.

BAPTISM.

WHEN the venerable Polycarp was on the eve of martyrdom, he is reported to have said that he had served Christ "eighty and six years."[1] By the ancient Church these words were regarded as tantamount to a declaration of the length of his life, and as implying that he had been a disciple of the Saviour from his infancy.[2] The account of his martyrdom indicates that he was still in the enjoyment of a green old age,[3] and as very few overpass the term of fourscore years and six, we are certainly not at liberty to infer, without any evidence, and in the face of probabilities, that he had now attained a greater longevity. A contemporary father, who wrote about the middle of the second century, informs us that there were then many persons of both sexes, some sixty, and some seventy years of age, who had been "disciples of Christ from childhood,"[4] and the pastor of Smyrna is apparently included in the description. If eighty-six at the time of his death, he

[1] See the "Epistle of the Church of Smyrna," giving an account of his martyrdom, § 9.

[2] The Latin version of his words, as given by Jacobson, is, "Octogesimum jam et sextum *annum ætatis* ingredior."—*Pat. Apost.*, ii. 565. See also the "Chronicum Alexandrinum" as quoted by Cotelerius, ii. 194; and Gregory of Tours, "Hist." i. 28.

[3] He is represented as *standing*, when offering up a prayer of two hours' length (§ 7), and as *running* with great speed (§ 8). Such strength at such an age was extraordinary. The Apostle John is said to have lived to the age of one hundred; but, toward the close of his life, he had lost his wonted energy.

[4] "Apol." ii. Opera, p. 62. See Dr. Wilson's observations on this passage in his "Infant Baptism," pp. 447, 448.

may have been about threescore and ten when Justin Martyr made this announcement.

No one was considered a disciple of Jesus who had not received baptism, and it thus appears that there were many aged persons, living about A.D. 150, to whom, when children, the ordinance had been administered. We may infer, also, that Polycarp, when an infant, had been in this way admitted within the pale of visible Christianity. Infant baptism was, therefore, an institution of the age of the apostles. This conclusion is corroborated by the fact that Justin Martyr speaks of baptism as supplying the place of circumcision. "We," says he, "who through Christ have access to God, have not received that circumcision which is in the flesh, but that spiritual circumcision which Enoch, and others like him, observed. And this, because we have been sinners, we do, through the mercy of God, receive *by baptism*."[1] Justin would scarcely have represented the initiatory ordinance of the Christian Church as supplying so efficiently the place of the Jewish rite, had it not been of equally extensive application. The testimony of Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, throws additional light upon this argument. "Christ," says he, "came to save all persons by Himself; all, I say, who *by Him are regenerated unto God* —infants, and little ones, and children, and youths, and aged persons; therefore He went through the several ages, being made an infant for infants, that He might *sanctify infants*;[2] and, for little ones, He was made a little one, to sanctify them of that age also."[3] Irenæus elsewhere speaks of baptism as *our regeneration* or *new birth unto God*,[4] so that his meaning in this passage can not well be disputed. He was born on

[1] Dialogue with Trypho. Opera, p. 261.

[2] There may here be a reference to 1 Cor. vii. 14.

[3] Book ii., c. xxii., § 4.

[4] Thus he says: "Giving to His disciples the power of *regeneration unto God*, He said to them, Go and teach all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."—Book iii., c. xvii., § 1. Thus, too, he speaks of the heretics using certain rites "to the rejection of *baptism, which is regeneration unto God*."—Book i., c. xxi., § 1. Irenæus here means that baptism is *typically* regeneration, in the same way as the bread and wine in the Eucharist are *typically* the body and blood of Christ.

the confines of the apostolic age, and when he mentions the *regeneration unto God* of "infants, and little ones, and children," he alludes to their admission by baptism to the seal of salvation.

The celebrated Origen was born in A.D. 185, and we have as strong circumstantial evidence as we could well desire that he was baptized in infancy.[1] Both his parents were Christians, and as soon as he was capable of receiving instruction, he began to enjoy the advantages of a pious education. He affirms, not only that the practice of infant baptism prevailed in his own age, but that it had been handed down as an ecclesiastical ordinance from the first century. "None," says he, "are free from pollution, though his life upon the earth be but the length of one day, and for this reason even infants are baptized, because by the sacrament of baptism the pollution of our birth is put away."[2] "The Church has received the custom of baptizing little children *from the apostles*."[3]

The only writer of the first three centuries who questions the propriety of infant baptism is Tertullian. The passage in which he expounds his views on this subject is a most transparent specimen of special pleading, and the extravagant recommendations it contains sufficiently attest that he had taken up a false position. "Considering," says he, "every one's condition and disposition, and also his age, the delay of baptism is more advantageous, but especially in the case of little children. For what necessity is there that the sponsors be brought into danger? Because they may fail to fulfil their

[1] That infant baptism was now practiced at Alexandria is apparent also from the testimony of Clemens Alexandrinus, who, in allusion to this rite, speaks of "the children that are *drawn up out of the water*."—*Pædag.* iii. c. 11.

[2] Hom. xiv. in "Lucam." Opera, iii. 948. See also Opera, ii. 230. Hom. viii. in "Leviticum."

[3] Comment. in "Epist. ad Roman." lib. v., Opera, iv. 565. According to Eusebius (vi. 19), the Christian doctrine was conveyed to Origen "from his forefathers"—ἐκ προγόνων—or, as Rufinus translates it, *ab avis atque atavis*, "from his grandfathers and great-grandfathers," so that the tradition may have been handed down in his own family from the apostolic age. See "Wall's History of Infant Baptism," i. 124. Oxford, 1836.

promises by death, or may be deceived by the child's proving of a wicked disposition. Our Lord says indeed, 'Do not forbid them to come unto me.' Let them come, therefore, whilst they are growing up, let them come whilst they are learning, whilst they are being taught where it is they are coming, let them be made Christians when they are capable of knowing Christ. Why should their innocent age make haste to the remission of sins? Men proceed more cautiously in worldly things; and he that is not trusted with earthly goods, why should he be trusted with divine? Let them know how to ask salvation, that you may appear to give it to one that asketh. For no less reason unmarried persons ought to be delayed, because they are exposed to temptations, as well virgins that are come to maturity, as those that are in widowhood and have little occupation, until they either marry or be confirmed in continence. They who know the weight of baptism will rather dread its attainment than its postponement."[1]

In the apostolic age all adults, when admitted to baptism, answered for themselves. Had additional sponsors been required for the three thousand converts who joined the Church on the day of Pentecost,[2] they could not have been procured. The Ethiopian eunuch and the Philippian jailer[3] were their own sponsors. Until long after the time when Tertullian wrote, there were, in the case of adults, no other sponsors than the parties themselves. But when an infant was dedicated to God in baptism, the parents were required to make a profession of the faith, and to undertake to train up their little one in the way of righteousness.[4] It is to this arrangement

[1] "De Baptismo," c. 18.

[2] Acts ii. 41.

[3] Acts viii. 37, 38; xvi. 31–33.

[4] *Parents* were commonly *sponsors for their own children*, ... and the extraordinary cases in which they were presented by others, were commonly such cases, where the parent could not, or would not, do that kind office for them; as when slaves were presented to baptism by their masters, or children whose parents were dead, were brought, by the charity of any who would show mercy on them; or children exposed by their parents, which were sometimes taken up by the holy virgins of the Church, and by them presented unto baptism. These are *the only cases* mentioned by St. Austin in which children seem to have had other sponsors."—*Bingham*, iii. 552.

that Tertullian refers when he says, "What necessity is there that *the sponsors* be brought into danger? Because even they may fail to fulfil their promises by death, or may be deceived by the child's proving of a wicked disposition."

It is plain, from his own statements, that infant baptism was practiced in the days of this father; and also, that it was then said to rest on the authority of the New Testament. Its advocates, he alleges, quoted in its defence the words of our Saviour, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."[1] And how does Tertullian meet this argument? Does he venture to say that it is contradicted by any other Scripture testimony? Does he pretend to assert that the appearance of parents as sponsors for their children, is an ecclesiastical innovation? Had this acute and learned controversialist been prepared to encounter infant baptism on such grounds, he would not have neglected his opportunity. But, instead of pursuing such a line of reasoning, he merely exhibits his weakness by resorting to a piece of miserable sophistry. When our Lord said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," He illustrated His meaning as He "took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them and blessed them";[2] so that the gloss of Tertullian, "Let them come *whilst they are growing up*, let them come whilst they are learning," is a palpable misinterpretation. Nor is this all. The Carthaginian father was aware that there were frequent instances in the days of the apostles of the baptism of whole households; and yet he maintains that the unmarried, especially young widows, can not with safety be admitted to the ordinance. Had he been with Paul and Silas at Philippi he could thus scarcely have consented to the baptism of Lydia; and he must certainly have protested against the administration of the rite to all the members of her family.[3]

Though Tertullian may not have formally separated from the Church when he wrote the tract in which this passage occurs,

[1] Mark x. 14. [2] Compare Mark x. 13–16 with Luke xviii. 15, 16.
[3] See Acts xvi. 15.

he had already adopted the principles of the Montanists. These errorists held that any one who had fallen into heinous sin after baptism should never again be admitted to ecclesiastical fellowship; and this little book itself supplies proof that its author supported the same doctrine. He here declares that the man "who renews his sins after baptism" is "destined to fire"; and he intimates that martyrdom, or "the baptism of blood," can alone "restore" such an offender.[1] It was obviously the policy of the Montanists to discourage infant baptism, and to retain the mass of their adherents, as long as possible, in the condition of catechumens. Hence Tertullian here asserts that "they who know the weight of baptism will rather *dread its attainment* than its postponement."[2] But neither the apostles, nor the early Church, had any sympathy with such a sentiment. They represent baptism as a privilege —as a sign and seal of God's favor—which all should thankfully embrace. On the very day on which Peter denounced the Jews as having with wicked hands crucified his Master, he assisted in the baptism of three thousand of these transgressors. "Repent," says he, "and *be baptized every one of you* in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, *for the promise is unto you and to your children.*"[3] Tertullian would have given them no such encouragement. But the Montanists believed that their Phrygian Paraclete was commissioned to supersede the apostolic discipline. When the African father attacked infant baptism he acted under this conviction; and whilst seeking to set aside the arrangements of the Church of his own age, he

[1] "De Baptismo," c. viii. xvi.

[2] It would be thought by many a cruelty to place a person *without his own consent*, and in unconscious infancy, in a situation, so far, much more disadvantageous than that of those brought up pagans, that if he did ever—suppose at the age of fifteen or twenty—fall into any sin, he must remain for the rest of his life—perhaps for above half a century—deprived of all hope, or at least of all confident hope, of restoration to the divine favor; shut out from all that cheering prospect which, if his baptism in infancy *had been omitted*, might have lain before him." — *Archbishop Whately's Scripture Doctrine concerning the Sacraments*, p. 11, note.

[3] Acts ii. 38, 39.

felt no scruple in venturing at the same time to subvert an institute of primitive Christianity.

We have the clearest evidence that, little more than twenty years after the death of Tertullian, the whole Church of Africa recognized the propriety of this practice. About the middle of the third century a bishop of that country, named Fidus, had taken up the idea, that, when administering the ordinance, he was bound to adhere to the very letter of the law relative to circumcision,[1] and that therefore he was not at liberty to baptize the child before the eighth day after its birth. When the case was submitted to Cyprian and an African synod, consisting of sixty-six bishops, they *unanimously* decided that these scruples were groundless; and, in an epistle addressed to the pastor who entertained them, the Assembly thus communicated the result of its deliberations: "As regards the case of infants who, you say, should not be baptized within the second or third day after their birth, and that respect should be had to the law of the ancient circumcision, whence you think that one newly born should not be baptized and sanctified within the eighth day, we all in our council thought very differently. . . . If even to the most grievous offenders, ... when they afterward believe, remission of sins is granted, and no one is debarred from baptism and grace, how much more ought not an infant to be debarred who, being newly born, has in no way sinned, except that being born after Adam in the flesh, he has by his first birth contracted the contagion of the old death; who is on this very account more easily admitted to receive remission of sins, in that, not his own, but another's sins are remitted to him."[2]

Whilst it is apparent that the baptism of infants was the established order of the Church, it is equally clear that the particular mode of administration was not considered essential to the validity of the ordinance. It was usually dispensed by immersion or affusion,[3] but when the health of the candidate

[1] Gen. xvii. 12; Lev. xii. 3.

[2] Epist. lix., pp. 211, 212.

[3] Laurentius, a Roman deacon, who flourished about the middle of the third century, is represented as baptizing one Romanus, a soldier, in a pitcher of water, and another individual, named Lucillus, by pouring water upon his head. See Bingham, iii. 599.

might have been injured by such an ordeal, sprinkling was deemed sufficient. Aspersion was commonly employed in the case of the sick, and was known by the designation of *clinic* or *bed* baptism. Cyprian points out to one of his correspondents the absurdity of the idea that the extent to which the water is applied can affect the character of the institution. "In the saving sacrament," says he, "the contagion of sin is not washed away just in the same way as is the filth of the skin and body in the ordinary ablution of the flesh, so that there should be need of saltpetre and other appliances, and a bath and a pool in which the poor body may be washed and cleansed. . . . . It is apparent that the *sprinkling* of water has like force with the saving washing, and that when this is done in the Church, where the faith both of the giver and receiver is entire,[1] all holds good and is consummated and perfected by the power of the Lord, and the truth of faith." [2]

Cyprian is here perfectly right in maintaining that the essence of baptism does not consist in the way in which the water is administered; but much of the language he employs in speaking of this ordinance can not be commended as sober and scriptural. He often confounds it with regeneration, and expresses himself as if the mere rite possessed a mystic virtue. "The birth of Christians," says he, "is in baptism." [3] "The Church alone has the *life-giving* water." [4] "The water must first be cleansed and sanctified by the priest, that it may be able, by baptism therein, to wash away the sins of the baptized." [5] Tertullian and other writers of the third century, make use of phraseology equally unguarded.[6] When the true character of the institute was so far misunderstood, it is not extraordinary that it began to be tricked out in the trappings of superstition. The candidate, as early as the third century,

[1] Here the validity of the ordinance is made to depend on the personal character of the administrator.

[2] Epist. lxxvi., p. 321. [3] Epist. lxxiv., p. 295.

[4] Epist. lxxvi., p. 317. In like manner Clement of Alexandria says, "Our transgressions are remitted by one *sovereign medicine*, the baptism according to the Word." See Kaye's "Clement," p. 437.

[5] Epist. lxx., p. 269. [6] Tertullian, "De Baptismo," c. 1

was *exorcised* before baptism, with a view to the expulsion of evil spirits;[1] and, in some places, after the application of the water, when the kiss of peace was given to him, a mixture of milk and honey was administered.[2] He was then anointed and marked on the forehead with the sign of the cross.[3] Finally, the presiding minister, by the laying on of hands, bestowed the benediction.[4] Tertullian endeavors to explain some of these ceremonies. "The flesh," says he, "is washed, that the soul may be freed from spots; the flesh is anointed, that the soul may be consecrated; the flesh is marked (with the sign of the cross), that the soul may be guarded; the flesh is overshadowed by the imposition of hands, that the soul may be enlightened by the Spirit."[5]

It is not improbable that the baptismal service constituted the first germ of a Church liturgy. As the ordinance was so frequently celebrated, it was found convenient to adhere to the same form, not only in the words of administration,[6] but also in the accompanying prayers; and thus each pastor soon had his own baptismal office. But when heresies spread, and when, in consequence, measures were taken to preserve the unity of the Catholic faith, a uniform series of questions—prepared, perhaps, by councils and adopted by the several ministers—was addressed to all catechumens. Thus the baptismal services were gradually assimilated; and, as the power of the hierarchy increased, one general office, in each district, superseded all the previously-existing formularies.

Baptism, as dispensed in apostolic simplicity, is a most significant ordinance; but the original rite was soon well-nigh

[1] Cyprian, "Con. Carthag." pp. 600, 602.

[2] See Kaye's "Clement of Alexandria," p. 441, and Tertullian, "De Corona," c. 3.

[3] Tertullian, "De Baptismo," c. 7.

[4] Tertullian, "De Baptismo," c. 8. The rite of confirmation thus originated. The Greek Church still follows the ancient usage, and dispenses it to infants shortly after baptism. See Waddington's "Present Condition of the Greek Church," p. 43. London, 1829.

[5] "De Resurrectione Carnis," c. 8.

[6] "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."—Matt. xxviii. 19.

hidden behind the rubbish of human inventions. The milk and honey, the unction, the crossing, the kiss of peace, and the imposition of hands, were all designed to render it more imposing; and, still farther to deepen the impression, it was already administered in the presence of none save those who had themselves been thus initiated.[1] But the foolishness of God is wiser than man. Nothing is more to be deprecated than any attempt to improve upon the institutions of Christ. Baptism, as established by the Divine Founder of our religion, is a visible exhibition of the Gospel; but, as known in the third century, it had much of the character of one of the heathen mysteries. It was intended to confirm faith; but it was now contributing to foster superstition. How soon had the gold become dim, and the most fine gold been changed!

[1] Bingham, iii. 377.

CHAPTER III.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

BAPTISM and the Lord's Supper may be regarded as a typical or pictorial summary of the great salvation. In Baptism the Gospel is exhibited subjectively—renewing the heart and cleansing from all iniquity: in the Lord's Supper it is exhibited objectively—providing a mighty Mediator, and a perfect atonement. Regeneration and Propitiation are central truths toward which all the other doctrines of Christianity converge; and in marking them out by corresponding symbols, the Head of the Church has been graciously pleased to signalize their importance.

The Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation and thoroughly furnished unto all good works; but we are not at liberty to adulterate these records either by addition or subtraction. If they should be preserved exactly as they issued from the pen of inspiration, it is clear that the visible ordinances in which they are epitomized should also be maintained in their integrity. He who tampers with a divinely-instituted symbol is obviously to some extent obnoxious to the malediction[1] pronounced upon the man who adds to, or takes away from, the words of the book of God's prophecy.

Had the original form of administering the Lord's Supper been rigidly maintained, the Church would have avoided a multitude of errors; but very soon the spirit of innovation began to disfigure this institute. The mode in which it was observed, and the views which were entertained respecting it by the Christians of Rome, about the middle of the second century, are minutely described by Justin Martyr. "There is brought,"

[1] Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

says he, "to that one of the brethren who is president, bread and a cup of wine mixed with water. And he, having received them, gives praise and glory to the Father of all things. . . . . And when he has finished his praises and thanksgiving, all the people who are present express their assent saying *Amen*, which in the Hebrew tongue signifies *so be it*. The president having given thanks, and the people having expressed their assent, those whom we call deacons give to each of those who are present a portion of the bread which has been blessed, and of the wine mixed with water; and carry away some for those who are absent. And this food is called by us the Eucharist, of which no one may partake unless he believes that which we teach is true, and is baptized, ... and lives in such a manner as Christ commanded. For we receive not these elements as common bread or common drink. But even as Jesus Christ our Saviour . . . . had both flesh and blood for our salvation, even so we are taught that the food which is blessed . . . . by the digestion of which our blood and flesh are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have related that Jesus thus commanded them, that having taken bread and given thanks He said, 'Do this in remembrance of me, this is my body'; and that in like manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, 'This is my blood'; and that He distributed them to these alone."[1]

The writer does not here mention the posture of the disciples when communicating, but it is highly probable that they still continued to *sit*,[2] in accordance with the primitive pattern. As they received the ordinance in the same attitude as that in which they partook of their common meals, the story

[1] "Apol." ii., Opera, pp. 97, 98.

[2] In an article on the Roman Catacombs, in the *Edinburgh Review* for January, 1859, the writer observes: "It is apparent from all the paintings of Christian feasts, whether of the Agapæ, or the burial feasts of the dead, or the Communion of the Holy Sacrament, that they were celebrated by the early Christians *sitting round a table*." See also Northcote's "Roman Catacombs," p. 63.

that their religious assemblies were the scenes of unnatural feasting, may have thus originated.[1] For the first three centuries, *kneeling* at the Lord's Supper was unknown; and it is not till about a hundred years after the death of the Apostle John, that we read of the communicants *standing*.[2] Throughout the whole of the third century, this was the position in which they partook of the elements.[3]

The bread and wine of the Eucharist were supplied by the worshippers, who made "oblations" according to their ability,[4] as well for the support of the ministers of the Church, as for the celebration of its ordinances. There is no reason to believe that the bread, used at this period in the holy Supper, was unfermented; for, though our Lord distributed a loaf, or cake, of that quality when the rite was instituted, the early Christians considered the circumstance accidental; as unleavened bread was in ordinary use among the Jews at the time of the Passover. The disciples had less reason for mixing the wine with water, and they could have produced no good evidence that such was the beverage used by Christ when He appointed this commemoration. In the third century superstition already recognized a mystery in the mixture. "We see," says Cyprian, "that in the water *the people* are represented, but that in the wine is exhibited the blood of Christ. When, however, in the cup water is mingled with wine, the people are united to Christ, and the multitude of the faithful are coupled and conjoined to Him on whom they believe."[5] The bread was not put into the mouth of the communicant by the administrator, but was handed to him by a deacon; and the better to show forth the unity of the Church,

[1] This calumny created much prejudice against them in the second century. See Justin Martyr's "Dialogue with Trypho," § 10; and the "Apology of Athenagoras," § 3. If Pliny refers to the Eucharist when he speaks of the early Christians as partaking of food together, it is obvious that they must then have communicated sitting, or in the posture in which they partook of their ordinary meals.

[2] Tertullian, "De Oratione," c. 14.

[3] See Euseb. vii. 9.

[4] Justin Martyr, "Apol." ii. 98; and Tertullian's "Apol." c. 39.

[5] Epist. lxiii. "To Cæcilius," Opera, p. 229.

all partook of one loaf made of a size sufficient to supply the whole congregation.[1] The wine was administered separately, and was drunk out of a cup or chalice. As early as the third century an idea began to be entertained that the Eucharist was necessary to salvation, and it was, in consequence, given to infants.[2] None were now suffered to be present at its celebration but those who were communicants;[3] for even the catechumens, or candidates for baptism, were obliged to withdraw before the elements were consecrated.

The Passover was kept only once a year, but the Eucharist, which was the corresponding ordinance of the Christian dispensation, was observed much more frequently. Justin intimates that it was administered every Lord's day, and other fathers of this period bear similar testimony. Cyprian speaks even of its daily celebration.[4] The New Testament has promulgated no precise law upon the subject, and only the more zealous disciples communicated weekly. On the Paschal week it was observed with peculiar solemnity, and by the greatest concourse of worshippers.

The term *sacrament* was applied to both Baptism and the Lord's Supper; but it was not confined to these two symbolic ordinances.[5] The word *transubstantiation* was not introduced until upwards of a thousand years after the death of our Saviour;[6] and the doctrine which it indicates was not known to any of the fathers of the first three centuries. They all concur in describing the elements, after consecration, as bread and wine; they all represent them as passing through the usual process of digestion; and they all speak of them as sym-

[1] Larroque's "History of the Eucharist," p. 35. London, 1684.

[2] Cyprian, "De Lapsis," Opera, pp. 375, 381. This was the result of carrying to excess a protest against the Montanist opposition to infant baptism. Such a reaction often occurs. It was now maintained that the Lord's Supper, as well as Baptism, should be administered to infants.

[3] At an earlier period it was dispensed in presence of the catechumens. See Bingham, iii. p. 380.

[4] "De Oratione Dominica," Opera, p. 421.

[5] See Kaye's "Tertullian," p. 357.

[6] See Gieseler's "Text-Book of Ecclesiastical History," by Cunningham, ii. 331, note 3.

bols of the body and blood of Christ. In this strain Justin Martyr discourses of "that *bread* which our Christ has commanded us to offer *in remembrance of His being made flesh*, ... and of that *cup* which He commanded those that celebrate the Eucharist to offer *in remembrance of His blood*."[1] According to Clement of Alexandria the Scripture designates wine "a mystic symbol of the holy blood."[2] Origen, as if anticipating the darkness which was to overspread the Church, expresses himself very much in the style of a zealous Protestant. He denounces as "simpletons"[3] those who attributed a supernatural power to the Eucharistic elements, and repeatedly affirms that the words used at the institution of the Lord's Supper are to be interpreted spiritually. "The meat," says he, "which is sanctified by the Word of God, and prayer, as it is material, goes into the stomach, ... but, by reason of prayer made over it, *it is profitable according to the proportion of faith*, and is the cause that the understanding is enlightened and attentive to what is profitable; and *it is not the substance of bread, but the word pronounced upon it*, which is profitable to him who eats it in a way not unworthy of the Lord."[4] Cyprian uses language scarcely less equivocal, for he speaks of "*that wine* whereby the blood of Christ is set forth,"[5] and asserts that it "was wine which He called His blood."[6]

Christ has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them";[7] and, true to His promises, He is really present with His people in every act of devotion. Even when they draw near to Him in secret, or when they read His Word, or when they meditate on His mercy, as well as when they listen to His Gospel preached in the great congregation, He manifests Himself to them not as He does unto the world. But in the Eucharist He reveals

[1] "Dialogue with Trypho," Opera, pp. 296, 297.
[2] See Kaye's "Clement of Alexandria," p. 445.
[3] *ἀκεραιοτέρων*, Opera, iii., p. 498.
[4] In Mat. tom. xi. Opera, iii., 499, 500.
[5] Epist. lxiii. "To Cæcilius," Opera, p. 225.
[6] Epist. lxiii., Opera, 228.
[7] Matt. xviii. 20.

His character more significantly than in any of His other ordinances; for He here addresses Himself to all the senses, as well as to the soul. In the words of institution, they "hear His voice"; when the elements are presented to them, they perceive, as it were, "the smell of His garments"; with their hands they "handle of the Word of Life"; and they "taste and see that the Lord is good." But some of the early Christian writers were by no means satisfied with such representations. They entertained an idea that Christ was in the Eucharist, not only in richer manifestations of His grace, but also in a way altogether different from that in which He vouchsafes His presence in prayer, or praise, or any other divine observance. They conceived that, as the soul of man is united to his body, the Logos, or Divine nature of Christ, pervades the consecrated bread and wine, so that they may be called His flesh and blood; and they imagined that, in consequence, the sacred elements imparted to the material frame of the believer the germ of immortality.[1] Irenæus declares that "our bodies, receiving the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, but possessed of the hope of eternal life."[2] This misconception of the ordinance was the fruitful source of superstition. The mere elements began to be regarded with awful reverence; the loss of a particle of the bread, or of a drop of the wine, was considered a tremendous desecration; and it was probably the growth of such feelings which initiated the custom of *standing* at the time of participation. But still there were fathers who were not carried away with the delusion, and who knew that the disposition of the worshipper was of far more consequence than the care with which he handled the holy symbols. "You who frequent our sacred mysteries," says Origen, "know that when you receive the body of the Lord, you take care with all due caution and veneration, that not even the smallest particle of the consecrated gift shall fall to

[1] Irenæus, "Contra Hæreses," v., c. 2, § 3. Clement of Alexandria says that "to drink the blood of Jesus is to partake of the incorruption of the Lord."—*Pædagogue*, book ii.

[2] "Contra Hæreses," iv., c. 18, § 5.

the ground and be wasted.[1] If, through inattention, any part thus falls, you justly account yourselves guilty. If then, with good reason, you use so much caution in preserving His body, how can you esteem it *a lighter sin to slight the Word of God* than to neglect His body?"[2]

"The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times."[3] The history of Baptism and the Lord's Supper demonstrated that, when speaking of the ordinances of religion, it is exceedingly dangerous to depart even from the phraseology which the Holy Spirit has dictated. In the second century Baptism was called "regeneration," and the Eucharistic bread was known by the compendious designation of "the Lord's body." Such language, if typically understood, could create no perplexity; but all by whom it was used did not give it a right interpretation, and thus many misconceptions were speedily generated. In a short time names for which there is no warrant in the Word of God were applied to the Lord's Supper; and false doctrines were eventually deduced from these ill-chosen and unauthorized designations. Thus, before the close of the second century, it was called an *offering*, and a *sacrifice*,[4] and the table at which it was administered was styled the *altar*.[5] Though these terms were now used rhetorically, in after-ages they were literally interpreted; and in this way the most astounding errors gradually gained currency. Meanwhile other topics led to keen discussion; but there was a growing disposition to shroud the Eucharist in mystery; and hence, for many centuries, the question as to the manner of Christ's presence in the ordinance awakened no controversy.

[1] This feeling prevailed in the time of Tertullian. "Calicis aut panis etiam nostri aliquid decuti in terram anxie patimur."—*De Corona*, c. 3.

[2] Hom. xiii. in "Exod." Opera, ii. 176. [3] Ps. xii. 6.

[4] See Kaye's "Justin Martyr," p. 94. Irenæus, iv., c. 17, § 5. Tertullian, "De Oratione," c. 14.

[5] "Nonne solemnior erit statio tua, si et ad aram Dei steteris?" Tertullian, "De Oratione," c. 14, or, according to Oehler, c. 19.

CHAPTER IV.

CONFESSION AND PENANCE.

WHEN the Evangelist Matthew is describing the ministry of John the Baptist, he states that there "went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan; and were baptized of him in Jordan, *confessing their sins*." [1] The ministry of Paul at Ephesus produced similar results; for "fear fell" on all the Jews and Greeks dwelling in that great capital, "and many that believed came, and *confessed*, and showed their deeds." [2]

The confession here mentioned obviously flowed spontaneously from deep religious convictions. It was not a private admission of guilt made to an ecclesiastical functionary; but a public acknowledgment of acts which weighed heavily on the consciences of individuals, and which they felt constrained to recapitulate and to condemn. Men awakened to a sense of their sins deemed it due to themselves and to society, to state how sincerely they deplored their past career; and their words often produced a profound impression on the multitudes to whom they were addressed. These confessions of sin, connected with a confession of faith in Christ, were generally associated with the ordinance of baptism. They were not required from all, but only tendered in cases where there had been notorious and flagrant criminality; and they were of a very partial character, only embracing such transgressions as the party had some urgent reason for specializing.

In the time of the apostles those who embraced the Gospel were immediately baptized. Thus, the three thousand persons converted on the day of Pentecost were forthwith re-

[1] Matt. iii. 5, 6.

[2] Acts xix. 17, 18.

ceived into the bosom of the Church; and the Philippian jailer, "the same hour of the night"[1] when he hearkened to "the word of the Lord," "was baptized, he and all his, straightway." But, soon afterward, the Christian teachers began to proceed with greater formality; and, about the middle of the second century, candidates were not admitted to the ordinance till they had passed through a certain course of probation. "As many," says Justin Martyr, "as are persuaded and believe that the things which we teach and declare are true, and promise that they are determined to live accordingly, are taught to pray, and to beseech God with fasting to grant them remission of their past sins, while we also pray and fast with them. We then lead them to a place where there is water, and there they are regenerated in the same manner as we also were; for they are then washed in that water in the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit."[2]

These confessions and penitential exercises were repeated and enlarged when persons who had lapsed into gross sin, and who had, in consequence, forfeited their position as members of the Church, sought readmission to ecclesiastical fellowship. It would be difficult, on scriptural grounds, to vindicate the system of discipline enforced on such occasions; and yet it is evident that it was established, at least in some quarters, as early as the beginning of the third century. Tertullian gives a very striking account of the course pursued by those called *penitents* about that period. "Confession of sins," says he, "lightens their burden, as much as the dissembling of them increases it; for confession savors of making amends—dissembling, of stubbornness. . . . . Wherefore confession is the discipline of a man's prostrating and humbling himself, enjoining such a conversation as invites mercy. It restrains a man even as to the matter of dress and food, requiring him to lie in sackcloth and ashes, to hide his body in filthy garments, to afflict his soul with sorrow, to exchange for severe treatment the sins in which he indulged; for the rest to use simple

[1] Acts xvi. 33.

[2] "Apol." ii., Opera, pp. 93, 94.

things for meat and drink, that is, for the sake of the soul, and not to please the appetite: for the most part also to quicken prayer by fasts, to groan, to weep, and to moan day and night before the Lord his God; to throw himself on the ground before the presbyters, and to fall on his knees before the beloved of God; to enjoin all the brethren to bear the message of his prayer for mercy—all these things does confession that it may commend repentance."[1]

When a man is overwhelmed with grief, the state of his mind will often be revealed by the loss of his appetite. He will think little of his dress and personal accommodation; and though he may give no utterance to his feelings, his general appearance will betray to the eye of an observer the depth of his affliction. The mourner not unfrequently takes a melancholy satisfaction in surrounding himself with the symbols of sorrow; and we read, accordingly, in Scripture how, in ancient times, and in Eastern countries, he clothed himself in sackcloth and sat in ashes.[2] There is a wonderful sympathy between the body and the mind; and as grief affects the appetite, occasional abstinence from food may foster a serious and contrite spirit. Hence fasting has been so commonly associated with penitential exercises.

Fasting is not to be regarded as one of the ordinary duties of a disciple of Christ,[3] but rather as a kind of discipline in which he feels called on to engage under special circumstances.[4] When oppressed with a consciousness of guilt, or anxious for divine direction on a critical occasion, or trembling under the apprehension of impending judgments, he thus seeks to "afflict his soul," that he may draw near with deeper humility and reverence into the presence of the Divine Majesty. But, in such a case, every one should act according to the dictates of his own enlightened convictions. As the duty is extraordinary, the self-denial to be practiced must be regulated by vari-

[1] "De Pœnitentia," c. ix.

[2] Joshua vii. 6; Esther iv. 1; Isaiah lviii. 5; Ezek. xxvii. 30.

[3] See a "Memorial concerning Personal and Family Fasting," by the pious Thomas Boston. Edinburgh, 1849.

[4] Matt. ix. 15.

ous contingencies; and no one can well prescribe to another its amount or duration.

According to the Mosaic law, only one day in the year—the great day of atonement—was required to be kept as a national fast.[1] There is now no divine warrant for so observing any corresponding day, and for upwards of a hundred years after the death of our Lord, there is no evidence that any fixed portion of time was thus appropriated under the sanction of ecclesiastical authority. But toward the close of the second century the termination of the Paschal week was often so employed—the interval, between the hour on Friday when our Lord expired and the morning of the first day of the week, being spent in total abstinence.[2] About the same time some partially abstained from food on what were called stationary days, or the Wednesday and Friday of each week.[3] At this period some began also to observe Xerophagiæ, or days on which they used neither flesh nor wine.[4] Not a few saw the danger of this ascetic tendency; but, whilst it betokened zeal, it had also "a show of wisdom,"[5] and it silently made great progress. Toward the close of the third century the whole Church was already pervaded by its influence.

Fasting has been well described as "the outward shell" of penitential sorrow, and is not to be confounded with its spiritual elements. It is its accidental accompaniment, and not one of its true and essential features. A man may "bow down his head as a bulrush," or fast, or clothe himself in sackcloth,

[1] Lev. xxiii. 27.

[2] The text Matt. ix. 15 was urged in support of this observance. See Tertullian, "De Jejun," c. ii.

[3] "Wednesday being selected because on that day the Jews took counsel to destroy Christ, and Friday because that was the day of His crucifixion." —*Kaye's Tertullian*, p. 418. As Wednesday was dedicated to Mercury and Friday to Venus, this fasting, according to Clement, signified to the more advanced disciple, that he was to renounce the love of gain and the love of pleasure. Kaye's "Clement," p. 454.

[4] These Xerophagiæ, or Dry Food Days, were even now objected to by some of the more enlightened Christians on the ground that they were an import from heathenism. Tertullian, "De Jejun," c. ii.

[5] Col. ii. 23.

when he is an utter stranger to that "repentance to salvation not to be repented of." The hypocrite may put on the outward badges of mourning merely with a view to regain a position in the Church, whilst the sincere penitent may "anoint his head and wash his face," and reveal to the eye of the casual spectator no tokens of contrition. As repentance is a spiritual exercise, it can only be recognized by spiritual signs; and the rulers of the ancient Church committed a capital error when they proposed to test it by certain dietary indications. Their penitential discipline was directly opposed to the genuine spirit of the Gospel; and was the fountain of many of the superstitions which, like a river of death, soon overspread Christendom. Whilst repentance was reduced to a mechanical round of bodily exercises, the doctrine of a free salvation was practically repudiated.

In connection with the appearance of a system of penitential discipline, involving in some cases a penance of several years' continuance,[1] the distinction of venial and mortal sins now began to be recognized. Venial sins were transgressions which any sincere believer might commit, whilst mortal sins were such as were considered incompatible with the genuine profession of Christianity. Penance was prescribed only to those who had been guilty of mortal sins. Its severity and duration varied with the character of the offence, and was soon regulated according to an exact scale arranged by the rulers of the Church in their ecclesiastical conventions.

About the middle of the third century a new arrangement was introduced, with a view to promote the more exact administration of penitential discipline. During the Decian persecution which occurred at this time, many were induced by fear to abandon the profession of the Gospel; and, on the return of better days, those who sought restoration to Christian privileges were so numerous that, in the larger churches, it was deemed expedient to require the lapsed, in the first instance, to address themselves to one of the presbyters appointed for their special examination. The business of this functionary,

[1] Thus Cyprian, Epist. liii., p. 169, speaks of a penance of three years' duration.

who was known by the designation of the *Penitentiary*,[1] was to hear the confessions of the penitents, to ascertain the extent and circumstances of their apostasy, and to announce the penance required from each by the existing ecclesiastical regulations. The disclosures made to the Penitentiary did not supersede the necessity of public confession; it was simply the duty of this minister to give to the lapsed such instructions as his professional experience enabled him to supply, including directions as to the fasts they should observe and the sins they should openly acknowledge. Under the guidance of the Penitentiaries, the system of discipline for trangressors was still farther matured; and at length, in the beginning of the fourth century, the penitents were divided into various classes, according to their supposed degrees of unworthiness. The members of each class were obliged to occupy a particular position in the place of worship when the congregation assembled for religious exercises.[2]

The institution known as Auricular Confession had, as yet, no existence. In the early Church the disciples, under ordinary circumstances, were neither required nor expected, at stated seasons, to enter into secret conference with any ecclesiastical searcher of consciences. When a professing Christian committed a heinous transgression by which religion was scandalized, he was obliged, before being readmitted to communion, to express his sorrow in the face of the congregation; and the revelations made to the Penitentiary did not relieve him from this act of humiliation. It is apparent that the whole system of penance is an unauthorized addition to the ordinances of primitive Christianity. Of such a system we do not find even a trace in the New Testament; and under its blighting influence, the religion of the Church gradually became little better than a species of refined heathenism.

The spiritual darkness settling down upon the Christian commonwealth may be traced in the growing obscurity of the ecclesiastical nomenclature. The power and the form of godliness began to be confounded, and the same term was em-

[1] Socrates, v., c. 19.

[2] See canon xi. of the Council of Nice.

ployed to denote penance and repentance.[1] Bodily mortification was mistaken for holiness, and celibacy for sanctity.[2] Other errors of an equally grave character became current, for the penitent was described as *making satisfaction* for his sins by his fasts and his outward acts of self-abasement,[3] and thus the all-sufficiency of the great atonement was openly ignored. Thus, too, the doctrine of a free salvation to transgressors could no longer be proclaimed, for pardon was clogged with conditions as burdensome to the sinner, as they were alien to the spirit of the New Testament. The doctrine that "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law,"[4] reveals the folly of the ancient penitential discipline. Our Father in heaven demands no useless tribute of mortification from His children; He merely requires us to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance."[5] "Is not this the fast that I have chosen?" saith the Lord, "to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rere-ward."[6]

[1] See Cyprian, Epist. xl., p. 53, and "ad Demetrianum," p. 442.
[2] See p. 382, note 3.
[3] See pp. 418, 419.
[4] Rom. iii. 28.
[5] Matt. iii. 8.
[6] Isa. lviii. 6–8.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH IN THE SECOND CENTURY.

JUSTIN MARTYR, who had travelled much, and who was as well acquainted with the state of the Church about the middle of the second century as most of his contemporaries, has left behind him an account of the manner in which its worship was then conducted. This account, which has already been submitted to the reader,[1] represents one individual as presiding over each Christian community, whether in the city or in the country. Where the Church consisted of a single congregation, and where only one of the elders was competent to preach, it is easy to understand how the society was regulated. In accordance with apostolic arrangement, the presbyter, who labored in the Word and doctrine, was counted worthy of double honor,[2] and was recognized as the stated chairman of the solemn assembly. His brother elders contributed in various ways to assist him in the supervision of the flock; but its prosperity greatly depended on his own zeal, piety, prudence, and ability. Known at first as *the president*, and afterward distinguished by the title of *the bishop*, he occupied very much the same position as the minister of a modern parish.

Where a congregation had more than one preaching elder, the case was different. There, several individuals were in the habit of addressing the auditory,[3] and it was the duty of the president to preserve order; to interpose, perhaps, by occasional suggestions; and to close the exercise. When several congregations with a plurality of preaching elders existed in the

[1] Period ii., sec. iii., chap. i., p. 424.
[2] 1 Tim. v. 17.
[3] Apost. Constit., ii., c. 17.

same city, the whole were affiliated; and a president, acknowledged by them all, superintended their united movements.

Much obscurity hangs over the general condition of the Christian commonwealth in the first half of the second century; but it so happens that two authentic and valuable documents which still remain, one of which was written about the beginning and the other about the close of this period, throw much light upon the question of Church government. These documents are the "Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians," and the "Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians." As to the matters respecting which they bear testimony, we could not desire more competent witnesses than the authors of these two letters. The one lived in the West; the other, in the East. Clement, believed by some to be the same who is mentioned by the Apostle Paul,[1] was a presbyter of the Church of Rome; Polycarp, who, in his youth, had conversed with the Apostle John, was a presbyter of the Church of Smyrna. Clement died about the close of the first century, and his letter to the Corinthians was written three or four years before; that is, immediately after the Domitian persecution;[2] Polycarp survived until an advanced period of the second century, and his letter to the Philippians may be dated fifty years or upwards later than the Epistle of Clement.[3]

[1] Phil. iv. 3.

[2] See Donaldson's "Crit. Hist. of Christian Literature and Doctrine from the Death of the Apostles to the Nicene Council," p. 91. London, 1864.

[3] No less than five persons are mentioned as having preceded Polycarp in the see of Smyrna, viz., Aristo, Stratæas, another Aristo, Apelles, and Bucolus. See Jacobson's "Patres Apostolici," ii. 564, 565, note. It is not at all probable that he became the senior presbyter long before the middle of the second century. Irenæus, indeed, tells us that he was constituted bishop of Smyrna *by the apostles* (lib. iii., c. 3, § 4)—a statement which implies that *at least two* of them were concerned in his designation to the ministry; but as he was still young when the last survivor of the twelve died in extreme old age, the words may not mean that he was actually ordained by those to whom our Lord originally intrusted the organization of the Church. The language may simply import that John and perhaps Philip had announced his future eminence when he was yet a child, and that thus, like Timothy, he was invested with the pastoral commission "according to the prophecies" which they had previously delivered. See 1 Tim. i. 18; iv. 14. But, per-

Toward the termination of the first century a spirit of discord disturbed the Church of Corinth; and the Church of Rome, anxious to restore peace, addressed a fraternal letter to the distracted community. The Epistle was drawn up by Clement, who was then the leading minister of the Italian capital; but, as it is written in the name of the whole brotherhood, and had obtained their sanction, it possesses all the authority of a public and official correspondence. From it the constitution of the Church of Corinth, and, by implication, of the Church of Rome, is easily ascertained; and it furnishes abundant proof that, at the time of its composition, both these Christian societies were under presbyterial government. Had a prelate then presided in either Church, a circumstance so important could not have been entirely overlooked, more especially as the document is of considerable length, and as it treats expressly upon the subject of ecclesiastical polity. It appears that some members of the community to which it is addressed had acted undutifully toward those who were over them in the Lord, and it accordingly condemns in very emphatic terms a course of proceeding so disreputable. "It is shameful, beloved," says the Church of Rome in this letter, "it is exceedingly shameful and unworthy of your Christian profession, to hear that the most firm and *ancient Church* of the Corinthians should, by one or two persons, be led into a sedition against *its elders*."[1] "Let the flock of Christ be in peace with THE ELDERS THAT ARE SET OVER IT."[2] Having stated that the apostles ordained those to whom the charge of the Christian Church was originally committed, it is added that they gave directions in what manner, after the decease of these primitive pastors, "other chosen and approved men should succeed to their ministry."[3] The Epistle thus continues: "Wherefore we can not think that those may justly be thrown out of their ministry who were either ordained by them (the

haps, by "apostles" Irenæus understands *apostolic men*, or ministers ordained by the inspired heralds of the Gospel. Thus Clemens Romanus is called an apostle by Clemens Alexandrinus. Strom. iv., p. 516. See also Euseb. 12.

[1] Sec. 74. [2] Sec. 54. [3] Sec. 44.

apostles), or *afterward by other approved men* with the approbation of the whole Church, and who have, with all lowliness and innocency, ministered to the flock of Christ in peace and without self-interest, and have been *for a long time* commended by all. For it would be no small sin in us, should we cast off those from the ministry who holily and without blame fulfil the duties of it. Blessed are *those elders who, having finished their course before these times*, have obtained a fruitful and perfect dissolution."[1] Toward the conclusion of the letter, the parties who had created this confusion in the Church of Corinth have the following admonition addressed to them: "Do ye, therefore, who laid the foundation of the sedition, submit yourselves unto your *elders*, and be instructed unto repentance, bending the knees of your hearts."[2]

In the preservation of this precious letter we are bound to recognize the hand of Providence.[3] Its instructions were so highly appreciated by the ancient Christians that it continued to be publicly read in many of their churches for centuries afterward.[4] It is universally acknowledged to be genuine; it breathes the benevolent spirit of a primitive presbyter; and it is distinguished by its sobriety and earnestness. It was written upon the verge of the apostolic age, and it is the production of a pious, sensible, and aged minister who preached for years in the capital of the Empire. The Church of Rome has since advanced the most extravagant pretensions, and has appealed in support of them to ecclesiastical tradition; but here, an elder of her own—one who had conversed with the apostles, and one whom she delights to honor[5]—deliberately comes

[1] Sec. 44. All these quotations attest the late date of the Epistle. Tillemont places it in A.D. 97. Eusebius had no doubt as to its late date. See his "History," iii. 16.

[2] Sec. 57.

[3] For many centuries it was considered lost. At length in the reign of Charles I. a copy of it was discovered appended to a very ancient manuscript containing the Septuagint and Greek Testament—the manuscript now known as the Codex Alexandrinus.

[4] Euseb. iii. 16; iv. 23.

[5] See the Romish Breviary under the 23d of November, where a number of absurd stories are told concerning him.

forward and ignores her assumptions! She fondly believes that Clement was an early Pope, but the good man himself admits that he was only one of the presbyters. Had there then been a bishop of Corinth, this letter would unquestionably have exhorted the malcontents to submit to his jurisdiction; or, had there been a bishop of Rome, it would not have failed to dilate upon the benefits of episcopal government. But, as to the existence of any such functionary in either Church, it preserves throughout a most intelligible silence. It says that the apostles ordained the first-fruits of their conversions, not as bishops *and presbyters* and deacons, but as "*bishops and deacons* over such as should afterward believe";[1] and when it was written, the terms bishop and presbyter were still used interchangeably.[2]

The Epistle of Polycarp bears equally decisive testimony. It was drawn up about the middle of the second century,[3] and though the last survivor of the apostles was now dead for many years, no general change had meanwhile taken place in the form of church government. This document purports to be the letter of "Polycarp and the elders who are with him to the Church of God which is at Philippi"; but it does not recognize a bishop as presiding over the Christian community to which it is addressed.[5] The Church was still in much the same state as when Paul wrote to "the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the *bishops and deacons*";[6] for Polycarp was certainly not aware of the existence of any new office-bearers; and he accordingly exhorts his correspondents to

[1] Sec. 42.

[2] They continued to be so used when the Peshito version of the New Testament was made. That version is assigned by the best authorities to the former half of the second century. See p. 384, note.

[3] It is of nearly the same date as the first Apology of Justin Martyr.

[4] *οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ πρεσβύτεροι*—evidently equivalent to *συμπρεσβύτεροι*. See 1 Pet. v. 1.

[5] Bishop Lightfoot bears this remarkable testimony concerning it: "Though two or three chapters are devoted to injunctions respecting the ministry of the Church, *there is not an allusion to episcopacy from beginning to end.*"—*Contemporary Review* for May, 1875, p. 839.

[6] Phil. i. 1.

be "*subject to the presbyters and deacons.*"[1] "Let *the presbyters*," says he, "be compassionate, merciful to all, bringing back such as are in error, seeking out all those that are weak, not neglecting the widow or the fatherless, or the poor; but providing always what is good in the sight of God and men; abstaining from all wrath, respect of persons, and *unrighteous judgment;* being far from all covetousness; not ready to believe anything against any; *not severe in judgment*, knowing that we are all debtors in point of sin."[2]

It is stated by the most learned of the fathers of the fourth century that the Church was at first "governed by the common council of the presbyters";[3] and these two letters prove most satisfactorily the accuracy of the representation. They show that throughout the whole of the apostolic age this species of polity continued. But the Scriptures ordain that "all things be done decently and in order";[4] and, as a common council requires an official head, or mayor, to take the chair at its meetings, and to act on its behalf, the ancient eldership, or presbytery, had a president or moderator. The duty and honor of presiding commonly devolved on the senior member of the judicatory. We thus account for those catalogues of bishops, reaching back to the days of the apostles, which are furnished by some of the writers of antiquity. From the first, every presbytery had its president; and as the transition from the moderator to the bishop was the work of time, the distinction at one period was little more than nominal. Hence, writers who lived when the change was taking place, or when it had only been recently accomplished, speak of these two functionaries as identical. But in their attempts to enumerate the bishops of the apostolic era, they encountered a practical difficulty. The elders who were at first set over the Christian societies were all ordained, in each church, on the same occasion,[5] and were, perhaps, of nearly the same age, so that neither their date of appointment, nor their years, could well determine the precedence; and, in general, no single individual continued permanently to occupy the office of mod-

[1] Sec. 5. [2] Sec. 6. [3] Jerome, "Comment. in Tit."
[4] 1 Cor. xiv. 40. [5] As in Acts xiv. 23.

erator. There may have been instances in which a stated president was chosen, and yet it is remarkable that not even one such case can be clearly established by the evidence of contemporary documents. James, called the Lord's brother, seems to have possessed great weight of character and much influence; it is not improbable that at one time he always acted, when present, as chairman of the mother presbytery; and, accordingly, the writers of succeeding ages have described him as the first bishop of the Jewish metropolis;[1] but so little consequence was originally attached to the office of moderator,[2] that, in as far as the New Testament is concerned, the situation held by this distinguished man can be inferred only from some very obscure and doubtful intimations.[3] In Rome, and elsewhere, the primitive elders at first, perhaps, filled the chair alternately.[4] Hence the so-called episcopal succession is most uncertain and confused at the very time when it should be sustained by evidence the most decisive and perspicuous. The lists of bishops, commencing with the ministry of the apostles, and extending over the latter half of the first century, are little better than a mass of contradictions. The compilers set down, almost at random, the names of some distinguished men whom they found connected with the different churches, and thus the discrepancies are nearly as numerous as the catalogues.[5]

[1] The extreme anxiety of Eusebius to give currency to this legend is apparent from his frequent repetitions of it. See his "Hist." ii. 23, iii. 5, iii. 7, iv. 5, vii. 19.

[2] I make no apology for employing a word which even the Benedictine Editor of Origen has adopted. Thus he speaks of the "senatores et *moderatores* ecclesiæ Dei."—*Contra Celsum*, iii. 30, Opera, i. 466.

[3] Such as Acts xxi. 18; Gal. ii. 12.

[4] The last surviving elder ordained by the apostles was perhaps the first constant moderator. His position gave him a peculiar claim to precedence.

[5] "At Antioch some, as Origen and Eusebius, make Ignatius to succeed Peter. Jerome makes him the third bishop, and placeth Evodius before him. Others, therefore, to solve that, make them contemporary bishops; the one, of the Church of the Jews; the other, of the Gentiles. . . . . Come we to Rome, and here the succession is as muddy as the Tiber itself; for here Tertullian, Rufinus, and several others, place Clement next to

But when Clement dictated the Epistle to the Corinthians most of the elders, ordained by the apostles or evangelists about the middle of the first century, had finished their career; and there is little reason to doubt that this eminent minister was then the father of the Roman presbytery. The superscription of the letter to the Philippians supplies direct proof that, at the time when it was written, Polycarp likewise stood at the head of the presbytery of Smyrna.[1] Other circumstances indicate that the senior presbyter now began to be regarded as the stated president of the eldership. Hilary, one of the best commentators of the ancient Church,[2] bears explicit testimony to the existence of such an arrangement. "At first," says he, "presbyters were called bishops, so that when the one (who was called bishop) passed away, the next in order took his place."[3] "Though every bishop is a presbyter, every presbyter is not a bishop, for he is bishop who is first among the presbyters."[4] As soon as the regulation recognizing the claims of seniority was proposed, its advocates were prepared to recommend it by arguments which possessed at least considerable plausibility. The Scriptures frequently

Peter. Irenæus and Eusebius set Anacletus before him; Epiphanius and Optatus both Anacletus and Cletus; Augustinus and Damasus, with others, make Anacletus, Cletus, and Linus all to precede him. What way shall we find to extricate ourselves out of this labyrinth?"—*Stillingfleet's Irenicum*, part ii., ch. 7, p. 321.

[1] "Polycarp, and the elders who are with him, to the Church of God which is at Philippi."

[2] A Roman deacon of the fourth century. His works are commonly appended to those of Ambrose.

[3] "Primum presbyteri episcopi appellabantur, ut, recedente uno, sequens ei succederet."—*Comment. in Eph.* iv.

[4] "Ut omnis episcopus presbyter sit, non omnis presbyter episcopus; hic enim episcopus est, qui inter presbyteros primus est."—*Comment. in* 1 *Tim.* iii. According to a learned writer this arrangement extended farther. "Ita, uti videtur, comparatum fuit, ut defuncto presbytero, primus ordine diaconus locum occuparet ultimum presbyterorum, novusque in locum novissimum substitueretur diaconus; decedente vero episcopo, primus ordine presbyter in ejus locum sufficeretur, et primus in ordine diaconorum novissimam presbyterii sedem capesseret."—*Thomæ Brunonis Judicium de auctore Can. et Const. quæ apost. dicuntur.* Cotelerius, ii., Ap., p. 179.

inculcate respect for age, and when the apostle says, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder,"[1] he seems, from the connection in which the words occur, to refer specially to the deportment of junior ministers.[2] In the lists of the Twelve to be found in the New Testament the name of Peter stands *first*;[3] and if, as is believed, he was more advanced in years than any of his brethren,[4] it is easy to understand why this precedence has been given to him; for in all likelihood, he usually acted as president of the apostolic presbytery. Even the construction of corporate bodies in the Roman Empire suggested the arrangement; for it is well known that, in the senates of the cities out of Italy, the oldest decurion, under the title *principalis*, acted as president.[5] Did we, therefore, even want the direct evidence already quoted, we might have inferred, on other grounds, that, at an early date, the senior member generally presided wherever an eldership was erected.

As a point of such interest relating to the constitution of the ancient Church should be carefully elucidated, it may be necessary to fortify the statement of Hilary by some additional evidence. This candid and judicious commentator did not venture, without due authority, to describe the original order of succession in the presidential chair; and he had access to sources of information which have long ceased to be available; but the credit of the fact for which he vouches does not rest upon the unsustained support of his solitary attestation. Whilst his averment is recommended by internal marks of probability, and countenanced by several scriptural intima-

[1] 1 Pet. v. 5. It is a curious and striking fact, arguing strongly in favor of the antiquity of their Church polity, that among the Vaudois Barbs o. old the claims of seniority were distinctly acknowledged. The following rule of discipline is taken from one of their ancient MSS.: "He that is received the last (into the ministry by imposition of hands) ought to do nothing without the permission of him that was received before him."—*Moreland, History of the Evang. Ch. of the Valleys of Piedmont*, p. 74.

[2] He is speaking immediately before of presbyters. See 1 Pet. v. 1–4.

[3] Matt. x. 2, "*The first*, Simon, who is called Peter." Mark iii. 16; Luke vi. 14; Acts i. 13.

[4] Jerome in "Jovin." i. 14.

[5] Savigny's "History of the Roman Law," by Cathcart, i. pp. 62, 63, 75.

tions, it is also corroborated by a large amount of varied and independent testimony. We shall now exhibit some of the most striking portions of the confirmatory proof.

I. The language applied in ancient documents to the primitive presidents of the Churches illustrates the accuracy of this venerable commentator. In one of the earliest extant notices of these ecclesiastical functionaries, a bishop is designated "the old man."[1] The age of the individual who is thus distinguished was not a matter of accident; for each of his brethren in the same position, all over the Church, was called "father"[2] on the ground of his seniority. The official title "*Pope*," which has the same meaning, had also the same origin. It was given at first to every president of the eldership, because he was, in point of fact, the father, or senior member, of the judicatory. It soon ceased to convey this meaning, but it still remained as a memorial of the primitive regimen.

II. It is a remarkable fact that in none of the great sees before the close of the second century, do we find any trace of the existence of a young, or even of a middle-aged bishop. When Ignatius of Antioch was martyred, he was verging on fourscore; Polycarp of Smyrna finished his career at the age of eighty-six; Pothinus of Lyons fell a victim to persecution when he was upwards of ninety;[3] Narcissus of Jerusalem was at least that age when he was first placed in the presidential chair;[4] one of his predecessors, named Justus, is said to have been one hundred and ten when he reached the same dignity;[5] and

[1] Euseb. iii. 23. ὁ πρεσβύτης.

[2] In Africa the senior bishop or metropolitan was called *father*. See Bingham, i. 200. In the second century we find the name given to the Roman bishop. See Routh's "Reliquiæ," i. 287. According to Eutychius, his predecessor in the see of Alexandria in the early part of the third century was called "Baba (Papa), that is, grandfather." Polycarp, in the account of his martyrdom, is called by the multitude "the father of the Christians." —*Euseb.* iv. 15.

[3] Euseb. v. 1.

[4] He was one hundred and sixteen years of age in A.D. 212 (Euseb. vi. 11), so that in A.D. 196, or about the time of the Palestinian Synod at which he presided (Euseb. v. 23), he was a century old.

[5] Etheridge's "Syrian Churches," pp. 9, 10.

Simeon of Jerusalem died when he had nearly completed the patriarchal age of one hundred and twenty. As an individual might become a member of the presbytery when comparatively young,[1] such extraordinary longevity among the bishops of the second century can be best explained by accepting the testimony of Hilary.

III. The number of bishops found within a short period in the same see has long presented a difficulty to many students of ecclesiastical history. Thus, at Rome in the first forty years of the second century there were five or six bishops,[2] and yet only one of them suffered martyrdom. Within twelve or fifteen years after the death of Polycarp, there were several bishops in Smyrna.[3] But the Church of Jerusalem furnishes the most wonderful example of this quick succession of episcopal dignitaries. Simeon, one of the relatives of our Lord, is said to have become the presiding pastor after the destruction of the city by Titus, and was martyred about the close of the reign of Trajan, or in A.D. 116; and yet, according to the testimony of Eusebius,[4] no less than *thirteen bishops* in succession occupied his place before the end of the year A.D. 134. He is said to have been set at the head of the Church when above threescore and ten;[5] and dying, as already stated, at the extreme age of one hundred and twenty, he left behind him a considerable staff of very aged elders. These

[1] See 1 Tim. iv. 12.

[2] That is, Anacletus, Evaristus, Alexander, Sixtus, Telesphorus, and Hyginus; but some consider Anacletus the same as Cletus, who is supposed to have died before Clement.

[3] Euseb. iv. 14. Pearson has noticed this fact, and has endeavored to erect upon it an argument against the current chronology. See his "Minor Works," ii. 527. The names of the three bishops of Smyrna next after Polycarp were Thraseas, Paparius, and Camerius. At least two of these had passed away a considerable time before the Paschal controversy. See Greswell's "Dissertations," iv., part ii., p. 600, note.

[4] "Hist.," iv., 5.

[5] According to Eusebius his appointment took place *after* the destruction of Jerusalem, or about A.D. 71. He was, therefore, at the head of the Church forty-five years, as his martyrdom occurred in A.D. 116. According to this reckoning he was in his seventy-fifth year when made president.

became presidents in the order of their seniority; and as they passed rapidly away, we may thus account for the extraordinary number of the early chief pastors of the ancient capital of Palestine.[1]

At this time, or about A.D. 135, the original Christian Church of Jerusalem was virtually dissolved. The Jews had grievously provoked Hadrian by their revolt under the impostor Barchochebas; and the Emperor, in consequence, resolved to exclude the entire race from the precincts of the holy city. The faithful Hebrews, who had hitherto worshipped there under the ministry of Simeon and his successors, still observed the Mosaic law, and were consequently treated as Jews, so that they were now obliged to break up their association, and remove to other districts. A Christian Church, composed chiefly of Gentile converts, was soon afterward established in the same place; and the new society elected an individual, named Marcus, as their bishop, or presiding elder. Marcus was, probably, in the decline of life when he was placed at the head of the community; and on his demise,[2] as well as long afterward, the old rule of succession was observed. During the sixty years immediately after his appointment, there were *fifteen* bishops at Jerusalem[3]—a fact which indicates that, on the occurrence of a vacancy, the senior elder still continued to be advanced to the episcopal chair. This conclusion is remarkably corroborated by the circumstance that Narcissus, who was bishop of the ancient capital of Judea at the end of these sixty years, was, as has been already men

[1] This explanation of the matter approximates to that given by Tillemont. "Cela peut estre venu de ce qu'on les choisissoit entre les plus agez du Clergé pour les faire Evesques: car on ne voit pas qu'ils ayent esté plus persecutez que d'autres."—*Mém. pour servir à l'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, tom. ii., part ii., p. 40. Eusebius (iii. 32) states that at the time of the death of Simeon there were still living a number of very old persons who were relatives of our Lord. Some of these were, probably, elders in the Church of Jerusalem.

[2] He is said in the "Chronicon" of Eusebius to have presided sixteen years.

[3] Euseb., v. 12.

tioned, upwards of fourscore and ten when he obtained his ecclesiastical promotion.

The episcopal roll of Jerusalem has no recorded parallel in the annals of the Christian ministry, for there were no less than *twenty-eight* bishops in the holy city in a period of eighty years. Even the Popes have never followed each other with such rapidity. The Roman Prelate, when elevated to St. Peter's chair, has almost invariably been far advanced in years, and the instances are not a few in which Pontiffs have fallen victims to poison or to open violence; and yet their history, even in the worst of times, exhibits nothing equal to the frequency of the successions indicated by this ancient episcopal registry.[1] It attests that there were more bishops in Jerusalem in the second century than there have been Archbishops of Canterbury for the last four hundred years![2] Such facts demonstrate that those who then stood at the head of the mother Church of Christendom reached their position by means of some order of succession very different from that which is now established. Hilary furnishes at once a simple and an adequate explanation. The senior minister was the president, or bishop; and as, when placed in the episcopal chair, he had already reached old age, it was not to be expected that he could long retain a situation which required some exertion and involved much anxiety. Hence the startling amount of episcopal mortality.

As the Church of Jerusalem was virtually founded by our Lord himself, it could lay claim to a higher antiquity than any other Christian community in existence; and it long continued to be regarded by the disciples all over the Empire

[1] In the tenth century, the darkest and most revolting period in the history of the Popedom, there were *twenty-four* bishops of Rome. Some of these reigned only a few days; at least one of them was strangled: several of them died in prison; and several others were driven from the see or deposed. There have been only twenty-four Popes in the last two hundred and fifty years.

[2] There were only twenty-eight Archbishops of Canterbury between 1454 and 1859.

with peculiar interest and veneration.[1] When re-established about the close of the reign of Hadrian, it was properly a new society; but it still enjoyed the prestige of ancient associations. Its history has, therefore, been investigated by Eusebius with special care; he tells us that he derived a portion of his information from its own archives;[2] and, though he enters into details respecting very few of the early Churches, he notices it with unusual frequency, and gives an accredited list of the names of its successive chief pastors.[3] About this period it was considered a model which other Christian societies of less note should imitate. It is, therefore, all the more important if we are able to ascertain its constitution, as we are thus prepared to speak with a measure of confidence respecting the form of ecclesiastical government which prevailed throughout the second century. The facts already stated, when coupled with the positive affirmation of the Roman Hilary, place the solution of the question, as nearly as possible, on the basis of demonstration; for, if we reject the conclusion that, during a hundred years after the death of the Apostle John, the senior member of the presbytery of Jerusalem was the president or moderator, we in vain attempt to explain, upon any sound statistical principles, how so many bishops passed away in succession within so limited periods, and how, at several points along the line, and exactly where they were to be expected,[4] we find individuals in occupation of the chair who had attained to extreme longevity.

IV. The statement of Hilary illustrates the peculiar cogency of the argumentation employed by the defenders of the faith who flourished about the close of the second century. This century was pre-eminently the age of heresies, and the disseminators of error were most extravagant and unscrupulous in their assertions. The heresiarchs, among other things, affirmed that the inspired heralds of the Gospel had not com-

[1] In the middle of the third century we find Firmilian appealing to it as a witness against the Church of Rome. Cyprian, Epist. lxxv., Opera, p. 303.

[2] "Hist.," vi. 20. [3] "Hist." iv. 5; v. 12.

[4] Such as, after the death of the aged Simeon, when Justus, at the age of fivescore and ten, was advanced to the presidential chair.

mitted their whole system to written records; that they had intrusted certain higher revelations only to select or perfect disciples; and that the doctrine of Æons, which they so assiduously promulgated, was derived from this hidden treasure of ecclesiastical tradition.[1] To such assertions the champions of orthodoxy were prepared to furnish a triumphant reply, for they could show that the Gnostic system was inconsistent with Scripture, and that its credentials, said to be derived from tradition, were utterly apocryphal. They appealed, in proof of its falsehood, to the tradition which had come down to themselves from the apostles, and which was still preserved in the Churches "through the successions of the elders."[2] They could farther refer to those who stood at the head of their respective presbyteries as the witnesses most competent to give evidence. "We are able," says Irenæus, "to enumerate those whom the apostles established as bishops in the Churches,[3] together with their successors down to our own times, who neither taught any such doctrine as these men rave about, nor had any knowledge of it. For if the apostles had been acquainted with recondite mysteries which they were in the habit of teaching to the perfect disciples apart and without the knowledge of the rest, they would by all means have communicated them to those to whom they intrusted the care of the Church itself, since they wished that those whom they left behind them as their successors, and to whom they gave their own place of authority, should be quite perfect and irreproachable in all things."[4]

Had the succession to the episcopal chair been regulated by the arrangements of modern times, there would have been

[1] Irenæus, iii. 2. Tertullian, "De Præscrip. Hæret.," § 25.

[2] "Ad eam iterum traditionem, quæ est ab apostolis, quæ *per successiones presbyterorum* in ecclesiis custoditur, provocamus eos."—*Irenæus*, iii. 2.

[3] Irenæus here speaks in the language of his own times, and refers to the presidents, or senior ministers, of the presbyteries. In like manner Hilary says that the change in the mode of appointing the president of the presbytery was made by the decision of many *priests* (multorum *sacerdotum* judicio), though the title *priest* was not given to a Christian minister when the alteration was originally proposed.

[4] Irenæus, iii. 3.

little weight in the reasoning of Irenæus. The declaration of the bishop respecting the tradition of the Church over which he happened to preside could have possessed no special value. But it was otherwise in the days of this pastor of Lyons. The bishop was generally one of the oldest members of the community with which he was connected, and had been longer conversant with its ecclesiastical affairs than any other minister. His testimony to its traditions was, therefore, of the highest importance. In a few of the great Churches, as we have elsewhere shown,[1] the senior elder no longer succeeded, as a matter of course, to the episcopate; but age continued to be universally regarded as an indispensable qualification for the office,[2] and, when Irenæus wrote, the law of seniority was still generally maintained. It was, therefore, with marked propriety that he appealed to the evidence of the bishops; as they, from their position, were most competent to expose the falsehood of the fables of Gnosticism.

V. It is well known that, in some of the most ancient councils of which we have any record, the senior bishop officiated as moderator;[3] and, long after age had ceased to determine the succession to the episcopal chair, the recognition of its claims, under various forms, may be traced in ecclesiastical history. In Spain, so late as the fourth century, the senior chief pastor acted as president when the bishops and presbyters assembled for deliberation.[4] In Africa the same rule was observed until the Church of that country was overwhelmed by the northern barbarians. In Mauritania and Numidia, even in the fifth century, the senior bishop of the province, whoever he might be, was acknowledged as metropolitan.[5] In the usages of a still later age we discover vestiges of the

[1] Period ii., sec. i., chap. iv.; and Period ii., sec. iii., chap. vii.

[2] According to a very ancient canon, no one under fifty years of age could be made a bishop. See Bunsen's "Hippolytus," iii. 56. Even in the time of Cyprian much stress was still laid upon age. See Cyprian, Epist. lii., p. 156.

[3] See Period ii., sec. iii., chap xi. See also Bingham, i. 198.

[4] Münter's "Primordia Ecclesiæ Africanæ," p. 49. See also Bingham vi. 377–379.

[5] Bingham, i. 201.

ancient regulation, for the bishops sat, in the order of their seniority, in the provincial synods.[1] Still farther, where the bishop of the chief city of the province was the stated metropolitan, the ecclesiastical law still retained remembrances of the primitive polity; as, when this dignitary died, the senior bishop of the district performed his functions until a successor was regularly appointed.[2]

Though the senior presbyter presided in the meetings of his brethren, and was soon known by the name of bishop, he originally possessed no superior authority. He held his place for life, but as he was sinking under the weight of years when he succeeded to it, he could not venture to anticipate an extended career of official distinction. In all matters relating either to discipline, or the general interests of the brotherhood, he was expected to carry out the decisions of the eldership, so that, under his presidential rule, the Church was still substantially governed by "the common council of the presbyters."

The allegation that presbyterial government existed in all its integrity toward the end of the second century does not rest on the foundation of obscure intimations or doubtful inferences. It can be established by direct and conclusive testimony. Evidence has already been adduced to show that the senior presbyter of Smyrna continued to preside until the days of Irenæus, and there is also documentary proof that he possessed no autocratical authority. The supreme power was still vested in the council of the elders. This point is attested by Hippolytus, who was then just entering on his ecclesiastical career, and who, in one of his works, a fragment of which has been preserved, describes the manner in which the rulers of the Church dealt with the heretic Noetus. The transaction occurred about A.D. 190.[3] "There are certain others," says

[1] Binius, i. 5. Fourth Council of Toledo, canon 4.

[2] Bingham, i. 204.

[3] Bunsen dates it about A.D. 200. "Hippolytus and his Age," p. 114. The recently-discovered treatise of Hippolytus against all heresies shows that Noetus appeared much earlier than most modern ecclesiastical historians have reckoned.

Hippolytus, "who introduce clandestinely a strange doctrine, being disciples of one Noetus, who was by birth a Smyrnean, and lived not long ago. This man, being puffed up, was led to forget himself, being elated by the vain fancy of a strange spirit. He said that Christ is himself the Father, and that the Father himself had been born, and had suffered and died. . . . . When the *blessed presbyters* heard these things, they *summoned him and examined him before the Church.* He, however, denied, saying at first that such were not his sentiments. But afterward, when he had intrigued with some, and had found persons to join him in his error, he took courage, and at length resolved to stand by his dogma. The *blessed presbyters again summoned him, and administered a rebuke.* But he withstood them, saying, 'Why, what evil am I doing in glorifying Christ?' To whom *the presbyters replied:* 'We also truly acknowledge one God; we acknowledge Christ; we acknowledge that the Son suffered as He did suffer, and that He died as He did die, and that He rose again the third day, and that He is at the right hand of the Father, and that He is coming to judge the quick and the dead; and we declare those things which we have been taught.' *Then they rebuked him, and cast him out of the Church.*"[1]

About the time to which these words refer a change was made in the ecclesiastical constitution. The senior minister ceased to preside over the eldership; and the Church was no longer governed, as heretofore, by the "blessed presbyters." The synods which were held all over the Church for the suppression of the Montanist agitation, and in connection with the Paschal controversy,[2] adopted a modified episcopacy. As parties already in the presidential chair were permitted to

[1] Routh, "Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Opuscula," tom. i., pp. 49, 50 Oxon, 1858. This extract proves that the Church of Smyrna continued under presbyterial government long after the time of Polycarp. Other Churches about this time were in the same position. See Eusebius, v. 16.

[2] During the Paschal controversy the Churches of Jerusalem, Cæsarea, and others, sided with Rome, and then adopted her ecclesiastical regimen. It had been generally adopted in Asia Minor during the Montanist agitation.

hold office during life, this change was not accomplished instantaneously; but various circumstances concur to prove that it took place about the period now indicated. The following reasons, among others, may be adduced in support of this view of the history of the ecclesiastical revolution.

I. The Montanists, toward the termination of the second century, created much confusion by their extravagant doctrines and their claims to inspiration. These fanatics were in the habit of disturbing public worship by uttering their pretended revelations, and as they were often countenanced by individual elders, the best mode of protecting the Church from their annoyance soon became a question of grave and pressing difficulty. Episcopacy, as shall afterward be shown,[1] had already been introduced in some great cities, and about this time the Churches generally agreed to follow the influential example.[2] It was thought that order could be more effectually preserved were a single individual armed with independent authority. Thus, the system of government by presbyters was gradually and silently subverted.

II. It is well known that the close of the second century is a transition period in the history of the Church. A new ecclesiastical nomenclature now appeared;[3] the bishops acquired increased authority; and, early in the third century, they were chosen in all the chief cities by popular suffrage. The alteration mentioned by Hilary was, therefore, the immediate precursor of other and more vital changes.

III. Though Eusebius passes over in suspicious silence the history of all ecclesiastical innovations, his account of the bishops of Jerusalem suggests that the law abolishing the claim of seniority came into operation at the close of the second century. He classes together the fifteen chief pastors who followed each other in the holy city immediately after its restoration by Hadrian,[4] and then goes on to give a list of

[1] Chapter vii. of this section.

[2] That the Churches in various places were still governed by elders, see Euseb. v. 16.

[3] The word *catholic* came now into use. The minister of the Word was called a *priest*, and the communion table an *altar*.

[4] Euseb. v. 12.

others, their successors, whose pastorates were of the ordinary duration. He mentions likewise that the sixteenth bishop was chosen by *election*.[1] May we not here distinctly recognize the termination of one system, and the commencement of another? As the sixteenth bishop was appointed about A.D. 199, the law had been then only recently enacted.

IV. Eusebius professes to trace the episcopal succession from the days of the apostles in Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem; and it has often been shown that the accuracy of these four lists is extremely problematical; but it is remarkable that in other Churches the episcopal registry can not be carried up higher than the end of the second century. The roll of the bishops of Carthage is there discontinued,[2] and the episcopal registry of Spain there also abruptly terminates. But the history of the Church of Cæsarea affords the most extraordinary specimen of this defalcation. Cæsarea was the civil metropolis of Palestine, and a Christian Church existed in it from the days of Paul and Peter.[3] Its bishop, in the early part of the fourth century, was the friend of the Emperor Constantine and the father of ecclesiastical history. Eusebius enjoyed all needful facilities for investigating the annals of his own Church; and yet, strange to say, he commences its episcopal registry about the close of the second century![4] What explanation can be given of this awkward circumstance? Had Eusebius taken no notice of any of the bishops of his own see, we could appreciate his modesty; but why should he overlook those who flourished before the time of Victor of Rome, and then refer to their successors with such marked frequency?[5] May we not infer, either that he deemed it inexpedient to proclaim the inconvenient fact that the bishops of Cæsarea were as numerous as the bishops of Jerusalem; or that he found it impossible to recover the names of a multitude of old men who had only a nominal

[1] Euseb. v. 10. The word *χειροτονίαν* here employed is indicative of a popular choice. See also the "Chronicon" of Eusebius.

[2] Münter's "Primordia Eccles. Afric.," pp. 25, 26.

[3] Acts x. 1, 45–48; xxi. 8.

[4] "Hist." v. 22.

[5] "Hist." v. 23; v. 25; vi. 19; vi. 23; vi. 46; vii. 14, etc., etc.

precedence among their brethren, and who had passed off the stage, one after another, in quick succession?

V. A statement of Eutychius, who was patriarch of Alexandria in the tenth century, and who has left behind him a history of his see from the days of the apostles, supplies a remarkable confirmation of the fact that, toward the close of the second century, a new policy was inaugurated. According to this writer there was, with the exception of the occupant of the episcopal chair of Alexandria, "no bishop in the provinces of Egypt" before Demetrius.[1] As Demetrius became bishop of Alexandria about A.D. 190, Christianity had now made extensive progress in the country;[2] for it had been planted there one hundred and fifty years before; but meanwhile, with the one exception, the Churches still remained under presbyterial government. Demetrius was a prelate of great influence and energy; and, during his long episcopate of forty-three years,[3] he succeeded in spreading all over the land the system of which he had been at one time the only representative.

It is not, indeed, to be supposed that the whole Church, prompted by a sudden and simultaneous impulse, agreed, all at once, to change its ecclesiastical arrangements. Another polity at first made its appearance in places of commanding influence; and its advocates most assiduously endeavored to recommend its claims by appealing to the fruits of experience. The Church of Rome took the lead in setting up a mitigated form of prelacy; the Churches of Antioch and Alexandria followed; and, soon afterward, other Christian communities of note adopted the example. That this subject may be fairly understood, a few chapters must now be employed in tracing the rise and progress of the hierarchy.

[1] "Annal." p. 332. See also Stanley's "Eastern Church," p. 113, note.

[2] See Lardner's Works, viii. 99. Edit. London, 1838.

[3] Eusebius, vi. 26. Toward the close of his episcopate Demetrius held several synods in Alexandria, at which a considerable number of bishops were present.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RISE OF THE HIERARCHY CONNECTED WITH THE SPREAD OF HERESIES.

EUSEBIUS, already so often quoted, and known so widely as the author of the earliest Church history, flourished in the former half of the fourth century. This distinguished father was a spectator of the most wonderful revolution recorded in the annals of the world. He had seen Christianity proscribed, and its noblest champions cut down by a brutal martyrdom; and he had lived to see a convert to the faith seated on the throne of the Cæsars, and ministers of the Church basking in the sunshine of Imperial bounty. He was himself a special favorite with Constantine; as bishop of Cæsarea, the chief city of Palestine, he had often access to the presence of his sovereign; and in a work still extant, professing to be a Life of the Emperor, he has well-nigh exhausted the language of eulogy in his attempts to magnify the virtues of his illustrious patron.

Eusebius may have been an accomplished courtier, but certainly he is not entitled to the praise of a great historian. The publication by which he is best known would never have acquired such celebrity, had it not been the most ancient treatise of the kind in existence. Though it mentions many of the ecclesiastical transactions of the second and third centuries, and supplies a large amount of information which would have otherwise been lost, it is a very ill-arranged and unsatisfactory performance. Its author does not occupy a high position either as a philosophic thinker, a judicious observer, or a sound theologian. He makes no attempt to point out the germs of error, to illustrate the rise and progress of ecclesi-

astical changes, or to investigate the circumstances which led to the formation of the hierarchy. Even the announcement of his Preface, that his purpose is "to record the successions of the holy apostles," or in other words, to exhibit some episcopal genealogies, proclaims how much he was mistaken as to the topics which should have been noticed most prominently in his narrative.[1] It is doubtful whether his history was expressly written, either for the illumination of his own age, or for the instruction of posterity; and its appearance, shortly after the public recognition of Christianity by the State,[2] is fitted to generate a suspicion that it was intended to influence the mind of Constantine, and to recommend the episcopal order to the consideration of the great proselyte.

About six or seven years after the publication of this treatise, a child was born who was destined to attain higher distinction, both as a scholar and a writer, than the polished Eusebius. This was Jerome—afterward a presbyter of Rome, and a father whose productions challenge the foremost rank among the memorials of patristic erudition. Toward the close of the fourth century he shone the brightest literary star in the Church, and even the proud Pope Damasus condescended to cultivate his favor. At one time he contemplated the composition of a Church history;[3] and we have reason to regret that the design was never executed, as his works demonstrate that he was in possession of much rare and important information for which we search in vain in the pages of the bishop of Cæsarea.

No ancient writer has thrown more light on the history of the hierarchy than Jerome. His remarks upon the subject frequently drop incidentally from his pen, and must be sought for up and down throughout his commentaries and epistles;

[1] His anxiety to exalt the hierarchy is strikingly exhibited in his address to Paulinus of Tyre, whom he describes as a "new Aaron or Melchisedek, like unto the Son of God." Ecc. Hist. x. 4.

[2] The "Ecclesiastical History" of Eusebius was published shortly after Constantine first publicly recognized Christianity. That event took place in A.D. 324, and with the same year the history terminates.

[3] "Vita Malchi," Opera, iv., pp. 90, 91. Edit. Paris, 1706.

but he speaks as an individual who was quite familiar with the topics he introduces; and, whilst all his statements are consistent, they are confirmed and illustrated by other witnesses. As a presbyter, he was jealous of the honor of his order; and, when in certain moods, he is very well disposed to remind the bishops that their superiority to himself was mere matter of human arrangement. One of his observations relative to the original constitution of the Christian commonwealth has been often quoted. "Before that, by the prompting of the devil, there were parties in religion, and it was said among the people, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, the Churches were governed by the common council of the presbyters. But, *after that each one began to reckon those whom he baptized as belonging to himself* and not to Christ, it was DECREED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD that one elected from the presbyters should be set over the rest, that he should have the care of the whole Church, that *the seeds of schisms* might be destroyed." [1]

Because Jerome in this place happens to use language which occurs in the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, we are not to understand him as identifying the date of that letter with the origin of prelacy. Such a conclusion would be quite at variance with the tenor of this passage. The words, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas," [2] are used by him rhetorically; he was accustomed to repeat them when describing schisms or contentions; and he has employed them on one memorable occasion in relation to a controversy of the

[1] "Antequam *Diaboli instinctu*, studia in religione fierent, et diceretur in populis, Ego sum Pauli, ego Apollo, ego autem Cephæ, communi presbyterorum consilio ecclesiæ gubernabantur. Postquam vero unusquisque eos quos baptizaverat suos putabat esse, non Christi, in toto orbe decretum est, ut unus de presbyteris, electus superponeretur cæteris, ad quem omnis ecclesiæ cura pertineret, et *schismatum semina tollerentur*."—*Comment. in Titum.* The language here used bears a strong resemblance to that employed by Lactantius long before, when treating of the same subject—"Multæ hæreses extiterunt, et *instinctibus dæmonum* populus Dei *scissus est*."—*Instit. Divin.*, lib. iv., c. 30.

[2] 1 Cor. i. 12.

fourth century.[1] The divisions among the Corinthians, noticed by Paul, were trivial and temporary; the Church at large was not disturbed by them; but Jerome speaks of a time when the whole ecclesiastical community was so agitated that it was threatened with dismemberment. The words immediately succeeding those which we have quoted clearly show that he dated the origin of prelacy after the days of the apostles. "Should any one think that the identification of bishop and presbyter, the one being a name of age and the other of office, is not a doctrine of Scripture, but our own opinion, let him refer to the words of the apostle saying to the Philippians, 'Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, *with the bishops and deacons*, Grace to you and peace,'[2] and so forth. Philippi is one city of Macedonia, and truly in one city, there can not be, as is thought, more than one bishop; but because, *at that time*, they called the same parties bishops and presbyters, therefore he speaks of bishops as of presbyters without making distinction. Still this may seem doubtful to some unless confirmed by another testimony. In the Acts of the Apostles it is written[3] that when the apostle came to Miletus he 'sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the same Church,' to whom, then, among other things, he said, 'Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you bishops,[4] to feed the Church of the Lord

[1] "Hic locus vel maxime adversum Hæreticos facit qui pacis vinculo dissipato atque corrupto, putant se tenere Spiritus unitatem; quum unitas Spiritus in pacis vinculo conservetur. Quando enim non idipsum omnes loquimur, et alius dicit *Ego sum Pauli, Ego Apollo, Ego Cephæ*, dividimus Spiritus unitatem, et eam in partes ac membra discerpimus."—*Comment. in Ephes.*, lib. ii., cap. 4. Again we find him saying: "Necnon et dissensiones opera carnis sunt, quum quis nequaquam perfectus, eodem sensu, et eadem sententia dicit. *Ego sum Pauli, et ego Apollo, et ego Cephæ et ego Christi*. . . . . Nonnumquam evenit, ut et in expositionibus Scripturarum oriatur dissensio, *e quibus hæreses quoque quæ nunc in carnis opere ponuntur*, ebulliunt."—*Comment. in Epist. ad Galat.*, cap. 5.

[2] Philip. i. 1, 2.

[3] Acts xx. 17, 28.

[4] Our translators, acting under instructions from James I., here render the word "overseers."

which He has purchased with His own blood.' And attend specially to this, how, calling the elders of the one city Ephesus, he afterwards addressed the same as bishops. Whoever is prepared to receive that Epistle which is written to the Hebrews under the name of Paul,[1] there also the care of the Church is divided equally among more than one, since he writes to the people, 'Obey *them* that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they are they who watch for your souls as those who must give account, that they may not do it with grief, since this is profitable for you.'[2] And Peter, who received his name from the firmness of his faith, in his Epistle speaks, saying, 'The *elders*, therefore, who are among you, I exhort, *who am also an elder*, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and who am a partaker of His glory which shall be revealed, feed that flock of the Lord which is among you, not by constraint, but willingly.'[3] We may thus show that anciently bishops and presbyters were the same; but, *by degrees*, THAT THE PLANTS OF DISSENSION MIGHT BE ROOTED UP, all care was transferred to one. As, therefore, the presbyters know that, in accordance with *the custom of the Church*, they are subject to him who has been set over them, so the bishops should know that they are greater than the presbyters, rather *by custom*, than by the truth of an arrangement of the Lord."[4]

[1] The Church of Rome, of which Jerome was a presbyter, long hesitated to receive the Epistle to the Hebrews. Its opposition to ritualism was, in the third and fourth centuries, offensive to the ecclesiastical leaders in the Western metropolis. In the first century no such doubts respecting it existed among the Roman Christians. See Period i., sec. ii., chap. i., p. 162.

[2] Heb. xiii. 17. The reading of Jerome, here, as well as in the case of other texts quoted, differs from that of our authorized version. He perhaps quoted from memory.

[3] 1 Pet. v. 1, 2.

[4] It may suffice to give in the original only the conclusion of this long quotation. "Paulatim vero, ut dissensionum plantaria evellerentur, ad unum omnem, solicitudinem esse delatam. Sicut ergo presbyteri sciunt se ex ecclesiæ consuetudine ei qui sibi præpositus fuerit esse subjectos; ita episcopi noverint se magis, consuetudine quam dispositionis dominicæ veritate presbyteris esse majores."—*Comment. in Titum.*

Jerome here explains himself in language which admits of no second interpretation; for all these proofs, adduced to show that the Church was originally under presbyterial government, are of a later date than the First Epistle to the Corinthians. The Epistle to the Philippians contains internal evidence that it was dictated during Paul's first imprisonment at Rome; the Epistle to the Hebrews appeared after his liberation; and the First Epistle of Peter was written in the old age of the apostle of the circumcision. Nor is this even the full amount of his testimony to the antiquity of the presbyterian polity. On another occasion, after mentioning some of the texts which have been given, he goes on to make quotations from the Second and Third Epistles of John—which are generally dated toward the close of the first century[1]—and he declares that prelacy had not made its appearance when these letters were written. Having produced authorities from Paul and Peter, he exclaims, "Do the testimonies of such men seem small to you? Let the Evangelical Trumpet, the Son of Thunder, whom Jesus loved very much, who drank the streams of doctrine from the bosom of the Saviour, sound in your ears, 'The *elder*, unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth';[2] and, in another epistle, 'The *elder* to the very dear Caius, whom I love in the truth.'[3] But *what was done afterwards*, when one was elected who was set over the rest, was *for a cure of schism;* lest every one, insisting upon his own will, should rend the Church of God."[4]

We have already seen[5] that extant documents, written about the close of the first century, and the middle of the second, bear similar testimony as to the original constitution of the Church. The "Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians"

[1] Thus Dr. Burton says that "the Epistles of St. John were composed in the *latter part* of Domitian's reign."—*Lectures*, i. 382. Jerome was evidently of this opinion, for he says that, in his First Epistle, he refers to Cerinthus and Ebion, who appeared toward the close of the first century. "Jam tunc hæreticorum semina pullularent Cerinthi, Ebionis, et cæterorum qui negant Christum in carne venisse, quos et ipse in Epistola sua Antichristos vocat."—*Prolog. in Comment. super Matthæum.*

[2] 2 John 1. [3] 3 John 1. [4] Epist. ci. "Ad Evangelum."

[5] Period ii., sec iii., chap. v., p. 455.

can not be dated earlier than the termination of the reign of Domitian, for it refers to a recent persecution,[1] it describes the community to which it is addressed as "most ancient," it declares that others occupied the places of those who had been ordained by the apostles, and it states that this second generation of ministers had been *long* in possession of their ecclesiastical charges.[2] Candid writers, of almost all parties, acknowledge that this letter distinctly recognizes the existence of government by presbyters.[3] The evidence of the letter of Polycarp[4] is not less explicit. Jerome, therefore, did not speak without authority when he affirmed that prelacy was established after the days of the apostles, and as an antidote against schism.

The Apostolic Church was comparatively free from divisions; and, whilst the inspired heralds of the Gospel lived, it could not be said that "there were parties in religion." The heretics were never able to organize any formidable combinations; they were inconsiderable in point of numbers; and, though not wanting in activity, those to whom our Lord had personally intrusted the publication of His Word, were ready

[1] Sec. 1.

[2] The reader may find the quotations in the preceding chapter, pp. 456, 457.

[3] Thus Milner says that "so far as one may judge by Clement's Epistle," the Church of Corinth, when the letter was written, had Church governors "*only of two ranks*," presbyters and deacons.—*Hist. of the Church*, cent. ii., chap. 1. Bishop Lightfoot bears the same testimony.

[4] As the letter supplies no trace whatever of the existence of a bishop in the Church to which it is addressed, Pearson is sadly puzzled by its testimony, and gravely advances the supposition that *the bishop of Philippi must have been dead* when Polycarp wrote! "Vindiciæ Ignatianæ," pars ii., cap. 13. Rothe is equally perplexed by the Epistle of Clement. He says that, "in the whole Epistle there is never any reference to a bishop of the Corinthian community," and he admits that, when the letter was written, "the Corinthian community had no bishop at all"; but, to support his favorite theory, he contends, like Pearson, that the bishop of Corinth must also have been dead! "Die Anfange der christlichen Kirche," pp. 403, 404. Strange that the bishop of Corinth and the bishop of Philippi both were dead at the only time when their existence was of any historical value, and that *no reference* is made either to them or their successors!

to oppose them, so that all their efforts were effectually checked or defeated. The most ancient writers acknowledge that, during the early part of the second century, the same state of things continued. According to Hegesippus, who outlived Polycarp fifteen or twenty years,[1] the Church continued till the death of Simeon of Jerusalem, in A.D. 116,[2] "as a pure and uncorrupted virgin." "If there were any at all," says he, "who attempted to pervert the right standard of saving doctrine, they were yet skulking in dark retreats; but when the sacred company of the apostles had, in various ways, finished their career, AND THE GENERATION OF THOSE WHO HAD BEEN PRIVILEGED TO HEAR THEIR INSPIRED WISDOM HAD PASSED AWAY, then at length the fraud of false teachers produced a confederacy of impious errors."[3] The date of the appearance of these parties is also established by the testimony of Celsus, who lived in the time of the Antonines, and who was one of the most formidable of the early antagonists of Christianity. This writer informs us that, though, in the beginning, the disciples were agreed in sentiment, they became, in his days, when "spread out into a multitude, divided and distracted, each aiming to give stability to his own faction."[4]

The statements of Hegesippus and Celsus are substantiated by a host of additional witnesses. Justin Martyr,[5] Irenæus,[6] Clemens Alexandrinus,[7] Cyprian,[8] and others, all concur in rep-

[1] See Euseb. iv., c. 11. [2] Euseb. iii. 32, and iv. 22.

[3] Euseb. iii. 32. Hegesippus, as quoted by Eusebius (iv. 22), speaks of a certain Thebuthis, who began secretly to corrupt the Christian doctrine "on account of his not having been made a bishop," apparently referring to the time when Simeon was appointed to preside over the Church of Jerusalem. A similar story is told of Valentine. But the statement of Hegesippus is vague, and throughout the whole of the first century the terms bishop and presbyter were used interchangeably.

[4] Origen, "Contra Celsum," iii. § 10, Opera, i. 453, 454.

[5] "Dialogue with Trypho," Opera, p. 253.

[6] "Contra Hæres." i. 27, § 1. [7] "Strom." p. 764.

[8] Epist. lxxiv., Opera, p. 293. The ancient writers speak of all the early schismatics as heretics. Thus Novatian, though sound in the faith, is so described. Cyprian, Epist. lxxvi., p. 315. When, therefore, Jerome speaks

resenting the close of the reign of Hadrian, or the beginning of the reign of Antoninus Pius, as the period when heresies burst forth, like a flood, upon the Church. The extant ecclesiastical writings of the succeeding century are occupied chiefly with their refutation. No wonder that the best champions of the faith were embarrassed and alarmed. They had hitherto been accustomed to boast that Christianity was the cement which could unite all mankind, and they had pointed triumphantly to its influence in bringing together the Jew and the Gentile, the Greek and the barbarian, the master and the slave, the learned and the illiterate. They had looked forward with high expectation to the days of its complete ascendency, when, under its gentle sway, all nations would exhibit the spectacle of one great and happy brotherhood. How, then, must they have been chagrined by the rise and spread of heresies! They saw the Church itself converted into a great battle-field, and every man's hand turned against his fellow. In almost all the populous cities of the Empire, as if on a concerted signal, the errorists commenced their discussions. The Churches of Lyons,[1] of Rome, of Corinth, of Athens, of Ephesus, of Antioch, and of Alexandria, resounded with the din of theological controversy. Nor were the heresiarchs men whom their opponents could afford to despise. In point of genius and of literary resources, many of them were fully equal to the most accomplished of their adversaries. Their zeal was unwearied, and their tact most perplexing. Mixing the popular elements of the current philosophy with a few of the facts and doctrines of the Gospel, they produced a compound by which many were deceived. How did the friends of the Church pro-

of the early schismatics, he obviously refers to the heretics. Irenæus says of them, "*Scindunt* et separant unitatem ecclesiæ."—Lib. iv., c. xxvi., § 2. In like manner Cyprian represents "heresies and schisms" as making their appearance after the apostolic age, and as inseparably connected. "Cum hæreses et schismata postmodum nata sint, dum conventicula sibi diversa constituunt."—*De Unitate Eccles.*, Opera, p. 400.

[1] The existence of heresy in Gaul in the second century is established by the fact that Irenæus spent so much time in its refutation. Had he not been annoyed by it, he never would have thought of writing his treatise "Contra Hæreses."

ceed to grapple with these difficulties? They, no doubt, did their utmost to meet the errorists in argument, and to show that their theories were miserable perversions of Christianity. But they did not confine themselves to the use of weapons drawn from their own heavenly armory. Not a few presbyters were themselves tainted with the new opinions; some of them were even ringleaders of the heretics;[1] and, in an evil hour, the dominant party resolved to change the constitution of the Church, and to try to put down disturbance by means of a new ecclesiastical organization. Believing, with many in modern times, that "parity breedeth confusion," and expecting, as Jerome has expressed it, "that the seeds of schisms might be destroyed," they sought to invigorate their administration by investing the presiding elder with authority over the rest of his brethren. The senior presbyters, the last survivors of a better age, were all sound in the faith; and, as they were still at the head of the Churches in the great cities, it was thought that, with enlarged prerogatives, they could the better confront the dangers of their position. The principle that, whoever would not submit to the bishop must be cast out of the Church, was accordingly adopted; and the new system was expected in due time to restore peace to the spiritual commonwealth.

At the same period arrangements were made in some places for changing the mode of advancement to the presidential chair, so that, in no case, an elder suspected of error could have a chance of promotion.[2] An immense majority of the presbyters were yet orthodox; and by being permitted to depart, as often as they pleased, from the ancient order of succession, and to nominate any of themselves to the episcopate, they could always secure the appointment of an individual representing their own sentiments. In some of the larger

[1] Valentine himself seems to have been a presbyter. He at one time expected to be made bishop.

[2] Such is the statement of Hilary: "Immutata est ratio, prospiciente concilio, ut non ordo sed meritum crearet episcopum, multorum sacerdotum judicio constitutum, ne indignus temere usurparet, et esset multis scandalum."—*Comment. in Eph.* iv.

Churches, where their number was considerable, they usually selected three or four candidates; and then permitted the lot to make the ultimate decision.[1] But the ecclesiastical revolution could not stop here. Jealousy quickly appeared among the presbyters; and, during the excitement of elections, the more popular candidates were not willing to limit the voting to the presbytery. The people chose their presbyters and deacons, and now that the office of moderator possessed substantial power, and differed so much from what it was originally, why should not all the members of the Church be allowed to exercise their legitimate influence? Such a claim could not be well resisted. Thus it was that the bishops were ultimately chosen by popular suffrage.[2]

Some contend that there is inconsistency in the statements of Jerome relative to prelacy. They allege, in proof, that whilst he describes the Church as governed, till the rise of "parties in religion," by the common council of the presbyters, he also speaks of bishops as in existence from the days of the apostles. "At Alexandria," says he, "from Mark the Evangelist [by whom the Church there was founded], to Heraclas and Dionysius the bishops [who flourished in the third century], the presbyters always named as bishop one chosen from among themselves and placed along with them[3] in a higher position."[4] It must appear, however, on due consideration, that here there is no inconsistency whatever. In the Epistle where this passage occurs, Jerome is asserting the ancient dignity of presbyters, and showing that they originally possessed prerogatives of which they had more recently been deprived. In proof of this he refers to the Church of Alexandria, one

[1] See Period ii., sec. i., chap. iv., pp. 302, 303; chap. v., p. 317.

[2] At an early period, out of three elders nominated by the presbytery, one was chosen by lot; subsequently, out of three elders chosen by lot, one was elected by the people. See pp. 302, 317. We find something analogous in the history of the previous hierarchy. Thus, in ancient Rome, a new member was originally chosen by the co-optation, or selection, of the existing college of pontiffs: afterward, the college nominated two candidates, of whom the people chose one. See "Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities," art. Pontifex.

[3] Collocatum.

[4] Epist. ci. "Ad. Evangelum."

of the greatest sees in Christendom, where for upwards of a century and a half after the days of the Evangelist Mark, the presbyters appointed their spiritual overseers, and performed all the ceremonies connected with their official investiture. But it does not therefore follow that meanwhile these overseers had always possessed exactly the same amount of authority. The very fact mentioned by Jerome suggests a quite different inference, as it proves that whilst the power of the presbyters had been declining, that of the bishops had increased. In the second century the presbyters inaugurated bishops; in the days of Jerome they were not permitted even to ordain presbyters.

Jerome says, indeed, that, in the beginning, the Alexandrian presbyters nominated their *bishops*, but we are not to conclude that the parties chosen were always known distinctively by the designation which he here gives to them. He evidently did not intend to convey such an impression, as in the same Epistle he demonstrates, by a whole series of texts of Scripture, that the titles bishop and presbyter were used interchangeably throughout the whole of the first century. By bishops he understands the presidents of the presbyteries, or the officials who filled the chairs which those termed bishops subsequently occupied. In their own age these primitive functionaries were called bishops and presbyters indifferently; but they partially represented the bishops of succeeding times, and they appeared in the episcopal registries as links of the apostolical succession, so that Jerome did not deem it necessary to depart from the current nomenclature. His meaning can not be mistaken by any one who attentively marks his language, for he has stated immediately before, that episcopal authority properly commenced when the Church began to be distracted by the spirit of sectarianism.[1]

[1] A few passages of the letter may here be given in the original. "Manifestissime comprobatur eundem esse episcopum atque presbyterum. . . . . Quod autem *postea* unus electus est, qui cæteris præponeretur, in schismatis remedium factum est, ne unusquisque ad se trahens Christi ecclesiam rumperet. Nam et Alexandriæ à Marco Evangelista usque ad Heraclam et Dionysium Episcopos, presbyteri semper unum ex se electum in excelsiori gradu collocatum episcopum nominabant."—*Epist.* ci. *ad Evangelum.*

In this passage, however, the learned father bears unequivocal testimony to the fact that, from the earliest times, the presbytery had an official head or president. Such an arrangement was known in the days of the apostles. But the primitive moderator was very different from the bishop of the fourth century. He was the representative of the presbytery—not its master. Christ had said to the disciples, "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."[1] Such a chief was at the head of the ancient presbytery. Without a president no Church court could transact business; and it was the duty of the chairman to preserve order, to bear many official burdens, to ascertain the sentiments of his brethren, to speak in their name, and to act in accordance with the dictates of their collective wisdom.[2] The bishop of after-times rather resembled a despotic sovereign in the midst of his counsellors. He might ask the advice of the presbyters, and condescend to defer to their recommendation; but he also negatived their united resolutions, and caused the refractory quickly to feel the gravity of his displeasure.

Though Jerome tells us how, for the destruction of the seeds of schisms, "*it was decreed throughout the whole* WORLD that one elected from the presbyters should be set over the rest," we are not to suppose that the decree was carried out, all at once, into universal operation. General councils were

[1] Matt. xx. 26, 27.

[2] The view here taken is sustained by the verdict of learned and candid Episcopalians. "When elders were ordained by the apostles in every Church, through every city, to feed the flock of Christ, whereof the Holy Ghost had made them overseers: they, to the intent that they might the better do it by common counsel and consent, did use to assemble themselves and meet together. In the which meetings, for the more orderly handling and concluding of things pertaining to their charge, they chose one amongst them to be the president of their company and moderator of their actions."—*The Judgment of Doctor Rainoldes touching the Original of Episcopacy more largely confirmed out of Antiquity, by James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh.* Ussher's Works, vii., p. 75. See also Hallam's "Constitutional History," ii. 180.

yet unknown, and the decree was sanctioned at different times and by distant Church judicatories. Such a measure was first thought of shortly before the middle of the second century, but it was not very extensively adopted until about fifty years afterward. The history of its origin must now be more minutely investigated.

CHAPTER VII.

PRELACY BEGINS IN ROME.

ANY attentive reader who has marked the chronology of the early bishops of Rome, as given by Eusebius,[1] may have observed that the pastorates of those who flourished during the first forty years of the second century were all of comparatively short duration. Clement is commonly reputed to have died about A.D. 100;[2] he was followed by Evaristus, Alexander, Xystus, and Telesphorus; and Hyginus, who was placed at the head of the Church in A.D. 139, and who died in A.D. 142, was the *fifth* in succession. Thus, the five ministers next in order after Clement occupied the post of president only forty-two years, and, with the exception of Hyginus, whose official career was very brief, each held the situation for nearly

[1] Pearson has endeavored to destroy the credit of this chronology, and has urged against it the authority of the "Annals of Eutychius"! "De Successione prim. Rom. Episc." He had before labored to prove that the testimony of these "Annals" is worthless. "Vindic. Ignat." pars i., c. xi.

[2] The chronology of Eusebius, as arranged by Bower in his "Lives of the Popes," stands thus:

Evaristus, . . .	A.D. 100 to A.D. 109.
Alexander, . . .	A.D. 109 to A.D. 119.
Sixtus (or Xystus), . .	A.D. 119 to A.D. 128.
Telesphorus, . . .	A.D. 128 to A.D. 139.
Hyginus, . . .	A.D. 139 to A.D. 142.
Pius, ...	A.D. 142 to A.D. 157.
Anicetus, . . .	A.D. 157 to A.D. 168.
Soter, ...	A.D. 168 to A.D. 176.
Eleutherius, . . .	A.D. 176 to A.D. 192.
Victor, ...	A.D. 192 to A.D. 201.

an equal period.[1] But, on the death of Hyginus, a pastorate of unusual length commences, as Pius, by whom he was followed, continued fifteen years in office—a term considerably more extended than that of any of his five predecessors. Reckoning from the date of the advancement of Pius, we find also a decided increase in the average length of the life of the president for the remainder of the century; as, of the ten individuals in all who were at the head of the Roman Church during its revolution, the five who followed next after Clement lived only *forty-two* years, whilst their five successors lived *fifty-nine* years. Thus, there is at least some ostensible ground for the inquiry whether any arrangement was made in the time of Hyginus, which may account for these statistics.

The origin of the Church of Rome, like the origin of the city, is buried in obscurity; and a very few facts constitute the whole amount of our information respecting it during the first century of its existence. About the time of Hyginus the twilight of history begins to dawn upon it. Guided by the glimmerings of intelligence thus supplied, we shall endeavor to illustrate this dark passage in its annals. The following statements contribute somewhat to the explanation of transactions which have hitherto been rarely noticed by modern ecclesiastical writers:

I. A change in the organization of the Church about the time of Hyginus, accounts for the increase in the average

[1] The following is the chronology of Pearson:

Clement, . . .	died A.D. 83.
Evaristus, . . .	A.D. 83 to A.D. 91.
Alexander, . . .	A.D. 91 to A.D. 101.
Xystus, ...	A.D. 101 to A.D. 111.
Telesphorus, . . .	A.D. 111 to A.D. 122.
Hyginus, . . .	A.D. 122 to A.D. 126.
Pius, ...	A.D. 127 to A.D. 142.
Anicetus, . . .	A.D. 142 to A.D. 161.
Soter, ...	A.D. 161 to A.D. 170.
Eleutherius, . . .	A.D. 170 to A.D. 185.
Victor, ...	A.D. 185 to A.D. 197.

— *Minor Works*, ii., pp. 570, 571.

length of the lives of the Roman bishops.[1] If the alteration, mentioned by Hilary, was now made in the mode of succession to the presidential chair, such a result followed. Under the new *régime*, the recommendation of large experience had still much weight in the choice of a bishop, but he frequently entered on his duties at an earlier age, and thus the ordinary duration of his official career was considerably extended.[2]

II. The time of Hyginus exactly answers to the description of the period when, according to the testimony of Jerome, prelacy commenced. The heretics then exhibited extraordinary zeal, so that "parties in religion" were springing up all over the Empire. The Church of Rome had hitherto escaped the contagion of false doctrine,[3] but now errorists from all quarters began to violate its purity and to disturb its peace. Valentine, Cerdo, Marcion, and Marcus appeared about this time in the Western capital.[4] Some of these men were noted

[1] I have endeavored, from the records of the late Synod of Ulster, to estimate the medium length of the incumbency of a moderator for life, being the senior minister of a presbytery of from ten to fifteen members, and have found that the average of thirty-six successions amounted to between eight and nine years. In these presbyteries young ministers generally constituted a considerable portion of the members. Had they all been persons advanced in life, the average must have been greatly reduced.

[2] During that part of the second century which terminated with the death of Hyginus, the average duration of the life of a Roman bishop very little exceeded eight years; whereas, during the remainder of the century, it amounted to nearly twelve years. According to the chronology of Pearson the disproportion is still greater, being as eight years and a fraction to fourteen years. If we insert the episcopate of Anacletus, it will be nearly as seven to fourteen.

[3] In the verses erroneously attributed to Tertullian, the Church of Rome is represented as in a flourishing state when visited by Cerdo.

> "Advenit Roman Cerdo, nova vulnera gestans
> Detectus, quoniam voces et verba veneni
> Spargebat furtim; quapropter ab agmine pulsus,
> Sacrilegum genus hoc genuit spirante dracone.
> Constabat pietate vigens Ecclesia Romæ
> Composita a Petro, cujus successor et ipse
> Jamque loco nono cathedram suscepit Hyginus."

[4] Euseb. iv. 11. Irenæus says that Valentine, the most famous and formidable of the Gnostic teachers, "came to Rome under Hyginus, was in

for their genius and learning; and they created no common ferment. They were assiduous in the dissemination of their principles, and several of them resorted to very extraordinary and unwarrantable expedients for strengthening their respective factions. An ancient writer represents them as conducting their adherents to water, and as baptizing them "in the name of the Unknown Father of the universe; in the Truth, the mother of all; and in Him who descended on Jesus." "Others again," says the same authority, "repeated Hebrew names to inspire the initiated with the greater awe."[1] These attempts at proselytism were not unsuccessful. Valentine, in particular, made many converts, and after his death, when Irenæus wrote a refutation of his heresy, his disciples were still numerous.[2]

The account given by Jerome of the state of the Christian interest when it was deemed necessary to set up episcopacy, is not so completely supplemented by the condition of the Church at any other period. Never certainly did the brethren at Rome more require the services of a skilful and energetic leader, than when the Gnostic chiefs settled in the great metropolis. Never could it be said with so much truth of their community, in the language of the Latin father, that "every one reckoned those whom he baptized as belonging to himself and not to Christ";[3] for, as we have just seen, some, when baptizing their disciples, used even new forms of initiation. Never, assuredly, had the advocates of expediency a better opportunity for pleading in favor of a decree ordaining that "one chosen from among the presbyters should be put over the rest, and that the whole care of the Church should be

his prime under Pius, and lived until the time of Anicetus."—*Contra Hæres.*, iii., 4, § 3. Cyprian speaks of "the more *grievous pestilences of heresy breaking forth* when Marcion the Pontian emerged from Pontus, whose master Cerdo came to Rome *during the episcopate of Hyginus*."—*Epist.* lxxiv. He adds, "But it is acknowledged that heresies *afterwards became more numerous and worse*."—*Epist.* lxxiv., Opera, pp. 293, 294.

[1] Euseb. iv. 11. See also a fragment attributed to Irenæus in Stieren's edition, i. 938.

[2] See Mosheim, "Commentaries," by Vidal, ii. 266.

[3] Hieronymus, "Comment. in Titum."

committed to him, that the seeds of schism should be taken away." [1]

III. The testimony of Hilary, who was contemporary with Jerome, exactly accords with the views here promulgated as to the date of this occurrence. This writer, who was also a minister of the Roman Church, was acquainted with a tradition that a change had taken place at an early period in the mode of ecclesiastical government. His evidence is all the more valuable as it contains internal proofs of derivation from an independent source; for, whilst it corroborates the statement of Jerome, it supplies fresh historical details. According to his account, "after that churches were erected in all places and offices established, an arrangement was adopted different from that which prevailed at the beginning." [2] By "the beginning" he understands the apostolic age, or the time when the New Testament was written.[3] He then goes on to say, in explanation, that it was found necessary to change the mode of appointing the chairman of the presbytery, and that he was now promoted to the office by election, and not by seniority.[4] Whilst his language indicates distinctly that this alteration was made after the days of the apostles, it also implies a date not later than the second century; for, though it was "after the beginning," it was at a time when churches had been only *recently* "erected in all places, and of-

[1] Hieronymus, "Comment. in Titum."

[2] "Tamen postquam in omnibus locis ecclesiæ sunt constitutæ, et officia ordinata, aliter composita res est, quam cœperat."—*Comment. in Epist. ad Ephes.*, cap. 4.

[3] "Ideo non per omnia conveniunt scripta apostoli ordinationi, quæ nunc in ecclesia est; quia hæc *inter ipsa primordia* sunt scripta."—*Ibid.*

[4] "Ut non ordo, sed meritum crearet episcopum."—*Ibid.* Hilary appears to have believed with Jerome that the Church was originally governed "by the common council of the presbyters," but that, meanwhile, *with their sanction*, or under peculiar circumstances, deacons might preach and even laymen baptize. Such, too, was the opinion of Tertullian. See Kaye's "Tertullian," pp. 226, 448. Hilary, however, maintained that this arrangement was soon abrogated. "Cœpit alio ordine et providentia gubernari ecclesia; quia si omnes eadem possent, irrationabile esset, et vulgaris res et vilissima videretur."

fices established." The period of the spread of heresies at Rome, at the commencement of the reign of Antoninus Pius, and when Hyginus closed his career, answers these conditions.

IV. As Rome was the headquarters of heathenism, it was also the place where the divisions of the Church proved most disastrous. There, the worship of the State was celebrated in all its magnificence; there, the Emperor, the Pontifex Maximus of the gods, surrounded by a splendid hierarchy of priests and augurs, presided at the great festivals; and there, thousands and tens of thousands, prompted by interest or by prejudice, were prepared to struggle for the maintenance of the ancient superstition. Already, the Church of Rome had often sustained the violence of persecution; but, notwithstanding the bloody trials it had undergone, it had continued steadily to gain strength; and a sagacious student of the signs of the times might even now have looked forward to the day when Christianity and paganism, on nearly equal terms, would be contending for mastery in the chief city of the Empire. But the proceedings of the heretics were calculated to dissipate all the visions of ecclesiastical ascendency. If the Roman Christians were split up into fragments by sectarianism, the Church, in one of its great centres of influence, was incalculably injured. And yet, how could the crisis be averted? How could heresy be most effectually discountenanced? How could the unity of the Church be best maintained? In times of peril the Romans had formerly been wont to set up a Dictator, and to commit the whole power of the commonwealth to one trusty and vigorous ruler. During the latter days of the Republic, the State had been almost torn to pieces by contending factions; and now, under the sway of the Emperors, it enjoyed comparative repose. It occurred to the brethren at Rome to try the effects of a similar change in the ecclesiastical constitution. By committing the government of the Church, in this emergency, almost entirely into the hands of one able and resolute administrator, they hoped to contend successfully against the dangers by which they were encompassed.

V. A recent calamity of a different character was calculated

to abate the jealousy which such a proposition would have otherwise awakened. Telesphorus, the immediate predecessor of Hyginus, suffered a violent death.[1] Telesphorus is the first bishop of Rome whose title to martyrdom can be fairly established; and not one of his successors during the remainder of the second century forfeited his life for his religion. The death of the presiding pastor, as a victim to the intolerance of heathenism, threw the whole Church into a state of confusion and perplexity; and when Hyginus was called upon to occupy the vacant chair, well might he enter upon its duties with deep anxiety. The appearance of heresy multiplied the difficulties of his office. It could now be asked with no small amount of plausibility—Is the presiding presbyter to have no special privileges? If his mind is to be harassed continually by errorists, and if his life is to be imperilled in the service of the Church, should he not be distinguished above his brethren? Without some such encouragement will not the elders at length refuse to accept a situation which entails so much responsibility, and yet possesses so little influence? Such questions, urged under such circumstances, must have been felt to be perplexing.

VI. As there was constant intercourse between the seat of government and all the provinces of the Empire, the Church of the metropolis soon contrived to avail itself of the facilities of its position for keeping up a correspondence with the Churches of other countries.[2] In due time the results became apparent. Every event of interest which occurred in any quarter of the Christian world was known speedily in the capital; no important religious movement could succeed without the concurrence and co-operation of the brethren at Rome; and its ministers gradually acquired such influence that they were able, to some extent, to control the public opinion of the whole ecclesiastical community. On this occasion they, perhaps, did not find it difficult to persuade their co-religionists to enter into their views. In Antioch, in Alexandria, in Ephesus, and elsewhere, as well as in Italy, the her-

[1] Irenæus, iii. 3, § 3.

[2] See Period ii., sec. i., chap. iv., pp. 304–305.

etics had been displaying the most mischievous activity;[1] and it is not improbable that the remedy now proposed by the ruling spirits in the great city had already suggested itself to others. During the summer months vessels were trading to Rome from all the coasts of the Mediterranean, so that Christian deputies, without much inconvenience, could repair to headquarters, and, in concert with the metropolitan presbyters, make arrangements for united action. If the champions of orthodoxy were nearly as zealous as the errorists,[2] they travelled much during these days of excitement. But had not the idea of increasing the power of the presiding pastor originated in Rome, or had it not been supported by the weighty sanction of the Church of the capital, it would not have been so readily and so extensively adopted by the Churches in other parts of the Empire.

VII. Though we know little of the early history of the Roman see, we have evidence that, on the death of Hyginus, there was a vacancy of unusual length; and circumstances, which meanwhile took place, argue strongly in favor of the conclusion that, at this time, the change in the ecclesiastical constitution indicated by Jerome actually occurred. According to some, the interval between the death of Hyginus and the commencement of the episcopate of Pius, his immediate successor, was of several years' duration;[3] but it is clear that the chair was vacant for a twelvemonth.[4] How are we to account for this interregnum? We know that subsequently, in the times of Decius and of Diocletian, there were vacancies of quite as long continuance; but then the Church was in the agonies of martyrdom, and the Roman Christians were prevented by the strong arm of imperial tyranny from filling up the bishopric. Now no such calamity threatened;

[1] Irenæus, i. 24, § 1; i. 28, § 1.

[2] Thus, Valentine travelled from Alexandria to Rome, and afterward settled in Cyprus. Marcion, who was originally connected with Pontus, and who taught in Rome, also travelled in Egypt and the East.

[3] "Blondelli Apologia pro Sententia Hieronymi," p. 18. Blondel makes the vacancy of four years' continuance.

[4] Pearson's "Minor Works," ii. p. 571.

and the commotions created by the heretics supply evidence that persecution was asleep. This long vacancy must be otherwise explained. If Hyginus had been invested with additional authority, and if he soon afterward died, his removal was the signal for the renewal of agitation. Questions which, perhaps, had not hitherto been mooted, now arose. How was the vacant place to be supplied? Was the senior presbyter, no matter how ill adapted for the crisis, to be allowed to take quiet possession? If other influential Churches required to be consulted, some time would thus be occupied; so that delay in the appointment was unavoidable.

During this interval the spirit of faction was busily at work. The heretic Marcion sought admission into the Roman presbytery;[1] and Valentine, who was now recognized as a presbyter,[2] no doubt supported the application. The presbytery itself was divided, and even Valentine had hopes of obtaining the presidential chair! His pretensions, at this period of his career, were sufficiently imposing. Though he may have been suspected of unsoundness in the faith, he had not yet committed himself by any public avowal of his errors; and as a man of literary accomplishment, address, energy, and eloquence, he had few compeers. No wonder, with so many disturbing elements in operation, that the see remained long vacant.

Some would willingly deny that Valentine was a candidate for the episcopal chair of Rome, but the fact can be established by evidence the most direct and conclusive. Tertullian, who had lived in the imperial city, and who was well acquainted with its Church history, expressly states that "Valentine hoped for the bishopric, because he excelled in genius and eloquence, but indignant that another, who had the superior claim of a confessor, obtained the place, he deserted the Catholic Church."[3] The Carthaginian father does not, indeed,

[1] Epiphanius, "Hæres." 42, Opera, tom. i., p. 302.

[2] See Burton's "Lectures," ii. 98.

[3] "Speraverat episcopatum Valentinus, quia et ingenio poterat et eloquio Sed alium ex martyrii prærogativa loci potitum indignatus de ecclesia authenticæ regulæ abrupit."—*Adv. Valent.*, c. iv.

here name the see to which the heresiarch unsuccessfully aspired, but his words shut us up to the conclusion that he alluded to Rome.[1] And we can thus discover at least one reason why the history of this vacancy has been involved in so much mystery. In a few more generations the whole Church felt compromised by any reflection cast on the orthodoxy of the great Western bishopric.[2] How sadly must many have been scandalized had it been proclaimed abroad that the arch-heretic Valentine once hoped to occupy the chair of St. Peter!

VIII. Two letters still extant, and supposed to have been addressed by Pius, the immediate successor of Hyginus, to Justus, bishop of Vienne in Gaul, supply corroborative evidence that the presiding pastor had recently obtained additional authority. Though the genuineness of these documents has been questioned, the objections urged against them have not been sufficient to prevent critics and antiquarians of all parties from appealing to their testimony.[3] It is not improbable that they are Latin translations from Greek originals, and we may thus account for a few words found in them which were introduced at a later period.[4] Their tone and spirit, which

[1] Tertulllan states that Valentine at first believed the doctrine of the Catholics *in the Church of Rome*. "De Præscrip." c. 30. When he came to the city he was admitted to communion. He set up a distinct sect after Pius was made bishop. It is impossible, therefore, to avoid the inference that he was mortified because he was not himself chosen. Tertullian here confounds Eleutherius and Hyginus.

[2] The unwillingness even of Tertullian to say anything to its prejudice has been often remarked. See Neander on a passage in the tract "De Virg. Veland," in his "Antignostikos," appended to his "History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church," in Bohn's edition, ii. 420. See also the same, p. 429. See also "De Pudicitia," c. 1.

[3] They are quoted as genuine by Binius, Baronius, Bona, Thorndike, Bingham, Salamasius, and many others. Bishop Beveridge speaks of one of them as of undoubted authority. "In *indubitata* illius epistola."—*Annot. in Can. Ap.* See Cotelerius, i. 459. Pearson rejects them as spurious, whilst contending so valiantly for the Ignatian Epistles.

[4] Such as *Missa* and *Titulus*. But that Pastor really did erect a place in which the Christians assembled for worship, as stated in one of these letters, is not improbable. See Routh's "Reliquiæ," i. 430. Pearson objects

are entirely different from the spurious productions ascribed to the same age, plead strongly in their favor as trustworthy witnesses. The writer makes no lofty pretensions as a Roman bishop; he speaks of himself simply as at the head of an humble presbytery; and it is difficult to divine the motive which could have tempted an impostor to fabricate such unpretending compositions. Though given as the veritable Epistles of Pius by the highest literary authorities of Rome, they are certainly ill calculated to prop up the cause of the Papacy. If their claims are admitted, they rank among the earliest authentic records in which the distinction between the terms bishop and presbyter is unequivocally recognized; and it is obvious that alterations in the ecclesiastical constitution, made under Hyginus, must have prepared the way for such a change in the terminology. In one of these Epistles Pius gives the following piece of advice to his correspondent: "Let the elders and deacons respect you, *not as a greater*, but as the servant of Christ."[1] This letter purports to have been written when its author anticipated the approach of death; and the individual to whom it is directed was just placed in the episcopal chair. Had Pius believed that Justus had a divine right to rule over the presbyters, why tender such an admonition? A hundred years afterward, Cyprian of Carthage, when addressing a young prelate, would certainly have expressed himself very differently. He would, probably, have complained of the presumption of the presbyters, have boasted of the majesty of the episcopate, and have exhorted the new bishop to remember his apostolical dignity. But, in the

to them on the ground that Eleutherius is spoken of in one of them as a *presbyter*, whereas Hegesippus describes him as *deacon* afterward in the time of Anicetus. See Euseb. iv. 22. But it is not clear that Hegesippus here uses the word deacon in its strictly technical sense. He may mean by it *minister* or *manager*, and may design to indicate that Eleutherius was the most *prominent official personage* under Anicetus, occupying the position afterward held by the *archdeacon*. It is also not improbable that, among the officials of the Roman Church in the times of Pius and Anicetus, there were two persons of the name of Eleutherius.

[1] "Presbyteri et Diaconi, non ut majorem, sed ut ministrum Christi te observent."

middle of the second century, such language must have been strangely out of place. Pius is writing to an individual, just entering on an office lately endowed with additional privileges, who could not yet afford to make an arbitrary use of his new authority. He, therefore, counsels him to moderation, and cautions him against presuming on his power. "Beware," says he, "in your intercourse with your presbyters and deacons, of insisting too much on the duty of obedience. Let them feel that your prerogative is not exercised capriciously, but for good and necessary purposes. Let the elders and deacons regard you, not so much in the light of a superior, as the servant of Christ."

In another portion of this letter a piece of intelligence is communicated, which, as coming from Pius, possesses peculiar interest. When the law was enacted altering the mode of succession to the presidency, it may be that the proceeding was deemed somewhat ungracious toward those aged presbyters who soon expected, as a matter of right, to obtain possession of the seat of the moderator. The death of Telesphorus, the predecessor of Hyginus, as a martyr, was, indeed, calculated to abate an anxiety to secure the chair; for the whole Church was thus painfully reminded that it was a post of danger, as well as of dignity; but still, when, on the occurrence of the first vacancy, Pius was promoted over the heads of older men, he may, on this ground, have felt, to some extent, embarrassed by his elevation. We infer, however, from this letter, that the few senior presbyters, with whose advancement the late arrangement interfered, did not long survive this crisis in the history of the Church; for the bishop of Rome here informs his Gallic brother of their demise. "Those presbyters," says he, "who were taught by the apostles,[1] and who have survived to our own days, with whom we have united in dispensing the word of faith, have now, in obedience to the call of the Lord, gone to their eternal rest."[2] Such a notice of the decease of

[1] That, in the time of Marcion, there were Roman presbyters who had been disciples of the apostles, see Tillemont, "Mémoires," tom. ii., sec. par. p. 215. Edit., Brussels, 1695.

[2] "Presbyteri illi qui ab apostolis educati usque ad nos pervenerunt, cum

these venerable colleagues is precisely what might have been expected, under the circumstances, in a letter from Pius to Justus.

IX. The use of the word *bishop*, as denoting the president of the presbytery, marks an era in the history of ecclesiastical polity. New terms are not coined without necessity; neither, without an adequate cause, is a new meaning annexed to an ancient designation. When the name bishop was first used *as descriptive of the chief pastor*, there was some special reason for such an application of the title; and the rise of the hierarchy furnishes the only satisfactory explanation.[1] If, then, we can ascertain when this new nomenclature first made its appearance, we can also fix the date of the origin of prelacy. Though the documentary proof available for the illustration of this subject is comparatively scanty, it is sufficient for our purpose; and it clearly shows that the presiding elder did not begin to be known by the title of bishop until about the middle of the second century. Polycarp, who wrote at that time,[2] still uses the terminology employed by the apostles. Justin Martyr, the earliest father who has left behind him memorials amounting in extent to anything like a volume, often speaks of the chief minister of the Church, and designates him, not the

quibus simul verbum fidei partiti sumus, a Domino vocati in cubilibus æternis clausi tenentur."

[1] Pearson ("Vindiciæ," par. ii., c. 13) has appealed to a letter from the Emperor Hadrian to the Consul Servianus as a proof that the terms *bishop* and *presbyter* had distinctive meanings as early as A.D. 134. The passage is as follows: "Illi qui Serapim colunt, Christiani sunt; et devoti sunt Serapi, qui se Christi episcopos dicunt. Nemo illic Archisynagogus Judæorum, nemo Samarites, nemo Christianorum Presbyter. . . . . Ipse ille Patriarcha, quum Ægyptum venerit, ab aliis Serapidem adorare, ab aliis cogitur Christum." Such a testimony only shows that Pearson was sadly in want of evidence. This same letter has, in fact, often been adduced to prove that the terms bishop and presbyter were still used interchangeably, and such is certainly the more legitimate inference. See Lardner's remarks on this letter, Works, vol. vii., p. 99. Edit., London, 1838.

[2] "The Philippians appear to have continued to live under the same aristocratic constitution (of venerable elders) *about the middle of the second century*, when Polycarp addressed his Epistle to them."—*Bunsen's Hippolytus*, i., 369. Bishop Lightfoot concurs in this view.

bishop, but *the president*.[1] His phraseology is all the more important as he lived for some time in Rome,[2] and adopted the style of expression current in the great city. But another writer, who was his contemporary, and who also resided in the capital, incidentally supplies evidence that the new title was then just coming into use. The author of the book called "Pastor," when referring to those who were at the head of the presbyteries, describes them as "THE BISHOPS, *that is*, THE PRESIDENTS OF THE CHURCHES."[3] The reason why he here deems it necessary to explain what he means by bishops can not well be mistaken. The name, in its new application, was not yet familiar to the public ear; and required to be interpreted by the more ancient designation. Could we tell when this work of Hermas was written, we could also, perhaps, name the very year when the president of the eldership was first called bishop.[4] It is now pretty generally admitted that the author was no other than the brother of Pius of Rome,[5] the immediate successor of Hyginus, so that he wrote exactly at the time when, as appears from other evidences, the transition from presbytery to prelacy actually occurred. His words furnish a very strong, but an undesigned, attestation to the novelty of the episcopal regimen.

X. But the most pointed, and certainly the most remarkable testimony to the fact that a change took place in the constitution of the Roman Church in the time of Hyginus is furnished from a quarter where such a voucher was to have been, least of all, anticipated. We allude to the *Pontifical Book*. This work has been ascribed to Damasus, the well-known bishop of the metropolis of the West, who flourished in the

[1] προεστὼς, Opera, pp. 97–99. [2] Euseb. iv. 11.

[3] "Episcopi, *id est, præsides ecclesiarum*."—Lib. iii., simil. ix., c. 27. There is a parallel passage to this in Tertullian, "De Baptismo," c. 17, "Summus sacerdos, *qui est episcopus*." This is, perhaps, the first instance on record in which a bishop is called the chief priest. Hence the necessity of the interpretation "qui est episcopus." Pastor considered an explanation of the title "episcopus" equally necessary.

[4] Neander supposes this work to have been written A.D. 156. "General History," ii. 443.

[5] See Period ii., sec. ii., chap. i., p. 334.

fourth century, but much of it is unquestionably of later origin; and though many of its statements are apocryphal, it is often quoted as a document of weight by the most distinguished writers of the Romish communion.[1] Its account of the early popes is little better than a mass of fables; but some of its details are exaggerations, or rather caricatures, of an authentic tradition; and a few grains of truth may be discovered here and there in a heap of fictions and anachronisms. This part of the production contains one brief sentence which has greatly puzzled the commentators,[2] as it is strangely out of keeping with the general spirit of the narrative, and as it contradicts, rather awkwardly, the pretensions of the popedom. According to this testimony, Hyginus "ARRANGED THE CLERGY AND DISTRIBUTED THE GRADATIONS."[3] Peter himself is described by Romanists as organizing the Church; but here, one of his alleged successors, upward of seventy years after his death, is set forth as the real framer of the hierarchy.[4] The facts already adduced prove that this obscure announcement rests upon a sound historical foundation, and that it vaguely indicates the alterations introduced into the ecclesiastical constitution. If Hilary and Jerome be employed as its

[1] So high indeed is its authority that many facts taken from it are recorded in the "Breviary." Even Bunsen appeals to it. See "Analecta Antenicæna," iii. 52, 53.

[2] Binius makes the following abortive attempt to explain the statement: "Quod hierarchicus catholicæ ecclesiæ ordo, quo presbyteri episcopis, diaconi presbyteris, populus presbyteris et diaconis subditus est, ab Hygino compositus esse hic dicitur, *non aliter intelligi potest*, quam quod Hyginus hierarchiæ ecclesiasticæ jam tempore apostolorum a Christo Domino constitutæ, et a sanctis Patribus ipso antiquioribus comprobatæ, quædam duntaxat injuria temporum et scriptorum deperdita addiderit, vel eadem quæ Divino jure instituta, et a patribus comprobata sunt, hac constitutione sua illustraverit."—*Concilia*, i. 65, 66.

[3] "Hic clerum composuit, et distribuit gradus."—*Binii Concil.* i. 65. Baronius, ad annum, 158.

[4] When referring to this statement Baronius says: "Porrò quod ad gradus cujusque ordinis in Ecclesia, quo ecclesiastica habetur composita hierarchia, jam a temporibus apostolorum hæc facta esse, *Ignatio auctore* et aliis, tomo primo Annalium demonstravimus; verum *aliqua antiquæ formæ ab Hygino fuisse addita*, vel eadem illustrata, *æquum est æstimare*."

interpreters, the truth may be easily eliminated. At a synod held in Rome, Hyginus brought under the notice of the meeting the confusion and scandal created by the movements of the errorists; and, with a view to correct these disorders, the council agreed to invest the moderator of each presbytery with increased authority, to give him a discretionary power as the general superintendent of the Church, and to require the other elders, as well as the deacons, to act under his advice and direction. A new functionary was thus established, and, under the old name of *bishop* or *overseer*, a third order was virtually added to the ecclesiastical brotherhood. Hence Hyginus, who took a prominent part in the deliberations of the convocation, is said to have "arranged the clergy and distributed the gradations."

The change in the ecclesiastical polity which now occurred led to results equally extensive and permanent, and yet it has been but indistinctly noticed by the writers of antiquity. Nor is it strange that we have no contemporary account of this ecclesiastical revolution. The history of other occurrences and innovations is buried in profound obscurity. We can only ascertain by inference what were the reasons which led to the general adoption of the sign of the cross, to the use of the chrism in baptism, to standing at the Lord's Supper, to the institution of lectors, acolyths, and sub-deacons, and to the establishment of metropolitans. Though the Paschal controversy agitated almost the whole Church toward the close of the second century, and though Tertullian wrote immediately afterward, he does not once mention it in any of his numerous extant publications.[1] Owing to peculiar circumstances the rise of prelacy can be more minutely traced than that of any other of the alterations introduced during the first three centuries. At the time the change was considered not very important; but, as the remaining literary memorials of the period are few and scanty, the reception which it experienced can now only be conjectured. The alteration was adopted as an antidote against the growth of heresy, and thus originat-

[1] See Kaye's "Tertullian," p. 414.

ing in circumstances of a humiliating character, there was little disposition, on the part of ecclesiastical writers, to dwell upon its details. Soon afterward the pride of churchmen began to be developed; and it was then found convenient to forget that all things originally did not accord with existing arrangements, and that the hierarchy itself was but a human contrivance. Prelacy soon advanced apace, and every bishop had an interest in exalting "his order." It is only wonderful that so much truth has oozed out from witnesses so prejudiced, and that the Pontifical Book contains so decisive a deposition. And the momentous consequences of this apparently slight infringement on the primitive polity can not be overlooked. That very Church which, in its attempts to suppress heresy, first departed from divine arrangements, was soon involved in doctrinal error, and eventually became the great foster-mother of superstition and idolatry.

It may at first seem extraordinary that the ecclesiastical transformation was so rapidly accomplished; but, when the circumstances are more attentively considered, this view of the subject presents no real difficulty. At the outset, the principle sanctioned produced very little alteration on the general aspect of the spiritual commonwealth. At this period a Church, in most places, consisted of a single congregation; and as one elder laboring in the word and doctrine was generally deemed sufficient to minister to the flock, only a slight modification took place in the constitution of such a society. The preaching elder, who was entitled by authority of Scripture[1] to take precedence of elders who only ruled, had always been permitted to act as moderator; but, on the ground of the new arrangement, the pastor began to assume an authority over his session which he had never hitherto ventured to exercise. In the beginning of the reign of Antoninus Pius the number of towns with several Christian congregations was but small; and if five or six leading cities approved of the system now inaugurated at Rome, its general adoption was thus secured. The statements of Jerome and Hilary attest that the

[1] 1 Tim. v. 17.

matter was submitted to a synod; and the remarkable interregnum which followed the death of Hyginus can be best accounted for on the hypothesis that meanwhile the ministers of the great metropolis found it necessary to consult the rulers of other influential and distant Churches. If the measure had the sanction of these foreign brethren, they were prepared to resort to it at home on the demise of their presiding presbyter. Heretics were disturbing the Church all over the Empire, so that the same arguments could be everywhere used in favor of the new polity. There was a vacancy in the presidential chair at Antioch about the time of the death of Hyginus; and in the course of the next year, a similar vacancy occurred at Alexandria.[1] If the three most important Churches then in Christendom, with the sanction of a very few others of less note, almost simultaneously adopted the new arrangement, the question was practically settled. There were probably not twenty cities to be found with more than one Christian congregation; and places of inferior consequence would speedily act upon the example of the large capitals. But unquestionably the system now introduced gradually effected a complete revolution in the state of the Church. The ablest man in the presbytery was commonly elevated to the chair, so that the weight of his talents, and of his general character, was added to his official consequence. The bishop soon became the grand centre of influence and authority, and arrogated to himself the principal share in the administration of all divine ordinances.

When this change commenced, the venerable Polycarp was still alive, and there are grounds for believing that, when far advanced in life, he was induced to undertake a journey to Rome on a mission of remonstrance. This view is corroborated by the fact that his own Church of Smyrna did not now adopt the new polity; for we have seen[2] that, upwards of a

[1] Euseb. iv. 11; iv. 19. Dr. Burton has well observed that Alexandria and Antioch were "the hotbeds from which nearly all the mischief arose, which, under the name of philosophy, inundated the Church in the second century."—*Lectures*, vol. ii., p. 103.

[2] Period ii., sec. iii., chap. v., pp. 470, 471.

quarter of a century after his demise, it still continued under presbyterial government. Irenæus was well acquainted with the circumstances which occasioned this extraordinary visit of Polycarp to Rome; but had he not come into collision with the pastor of the great city in the controversy relating to the Paschal Feast, we would never have heard of its occurrence. Even when he mentions it, he observes a mysterious silence as to its main design. The Paschal question awakened little interest in the days of Polycarp, and among the topics which he discussed with Anicetus when at Rome, it occupied a subordinate position.[1] "When," says Irenæus, "the most blessed Polycarp came to Rome in the days of Anicetus, and when as to *certain other matters* they had a little controversy, they were immediately agreed on this point (of the Passover) without any disputation."[2] What the "certain other matters" were which created the chief dissatisfaction, we are left obscurely to conjecture; but they must have been of no ordinary consequence, when so eminent a minister as Polycarp, now verging on eighty years of age, felt it necessary to make a lengthened journey by sea and land with a view to their adjustment. He considered that Anicetus was at least influentially connected with arrangements which he deemed objectionable; and felt that he could obtain their modification or abandonment only by a personal conference with the Roman pastor. And intimations are not wanting that he was doubtful whether Anicetus would treat with him as his ecclesiastical peer, for he seems to have been in some degree appeased when the bishop of the capital permitted him to preside in the Church at the celebration of the Eucharist.[3] This, certainly, was no extraordinary piece of condescension; as Polycarp, on various grounds, was entitled to take precedence of his Roman brother;[4] and the reception given to the

[1] "Quanquam sunt inter scriptores ecclesiasticos qui putaverint Polycarpum Roman venisse, ut quæreret de festo paschatis: ex his Irenæi verbis luce clarius elucet, *ob alias causas* Ioannis apostoli discipulum Roman profectum esse."—*Stieren's Irenæus*, i., p. 826, note.

[2] Euseb. v. 24.

[3] Stieren's "Irenæus," i. 827.

[4] First, as his senior; and secondly, as a disciple of the apostles.

"apostolic presbyter" was only what might have fairly been expected in the way of ministerial courtesy.[1] Why has it then been mentioned as an exhibition of the episcopal humility of Anicetus? Obviously because he had been previously making some arrogant assumptions. He had been, probably, presuming on his position as a pastor of the "new order," and his bearing had been so offensive that Polycarp had been commissioned to visit him on an errand of expostulation. But by prudently paying marked deference to the aged stranger, and by giving a plausible account of some proceedings which had awakened anxiety, he succeeded in quieting his apprehensions. That the presiding minister of the Church of Smyrna was engaged in some such delicate mission is all but certain, as the design of the journey would not otherwise have been involved in so profound secrecy. The very fact of its occurrence is first noticed forty years afterward, when the haughty behavior of another bishop of Rome provoked Irenæus to call up certain unwelcome reminiscences which it suggested.

Though the journey of Polycarp betokens that he was deeply dissatisfied with something going forward in the great metropolis, we can only guess at its design and its results; and it is now impossible to ascertain whether the alterations introduced there encountered any very formidable opposition; but it is by no means improbable that they were effected without much difficulty. The disorders of the Church imperatively called for some strong remedy; and it occurred to not a few that a distracted presbytery, under the presidency of a feeble old man, was ill fitted to meet the emergency. They accordingly proposed to strengthen the executive government by providing for the appointment of a more efficient moderator, and by arming him with additional authority. The people were gratified by the change, for, though in Rome and some other great cities, where its effects were felt most sensibly, they met before this time in separate congregations, they had

[1] It was a standing rule of the Church that a strange bishop was to be thus treated. See "Didascalia," by Platt, p. 97. See also 19th canon of the Council of Arles, held A.D. 314.

still much united intercourse; and as, on such occasions, their edification depended mainly on the gifts of the chairman of the eldership, they gladly joined in advancing the best preacher in the presbytery to the office of president. At this particular crisis the alteration was not unacceptable to the elders themselves. To those of them who were in the decline of life, there was nothing very inviting in the prospect of occupying the most prominent position in a Church threatened by persecution and torn by divisions, so that they were not unwilling to waive any claim to the presidency which their seniority implied; whilst the more vigorous, sanguine, and aspiring hailed an arrangement which promised at no distant day to place one of themselves in a position of greatly increased dignity and influence. All were agreed that the times demanded the appointment of the ablest member of presbytery as moderator; and none, perhaps, foresaw the danger of adding permanently to the prerogatives of so potent a chairman. It was never anticipated that the day was to come when the new law would be regarded as any other than a human contrivance; and when the bishops and their adherents would contend that the presbyters, under no circumstances whatever, had a right to reassume that power which they now surrendered. The result, however, has demonstrated the folly of human wisdom. The prelates, originally designed to save the Church from heresy, became themselves at length the abettors of false doctrine; and whilst they grievously abused the influence with which they were entrusted, they had the temerity to maintain that they still continued to be exclusively the fountains of spiritual authority.

Prelacy was not set up at once in the plenitude of its power. Neither was the system simultaneously adopted by Christians all over the world. Jerome informs us that it was established "by little and little";[1] and he thus refers, as well to its gradual spread, as to the almost imperceptible growth of its pretensions. We have shown in a preceding chapter,[2] that in

[1] "*Paulatim* vero, ut dissensionum plantaria evellerentur, ad unum omnem solicitudinem esse delatam."—*Comment. in Tit.*

[2] Period ii., sec. iii., chap. v., pp. 464, 466, 470, 473.

various cities, such as Smyrna, Cæsarea, and Jerusalem, the senior presbyter continued to be the president till the close of the second century; and there the Church was meanwhile governed by "the common council of the presbyters."[1] In many places, even at a much later period, the episcopal system was still unknown.[2] But its advocates were active and influential, and they continued to make steady progress. The consolidation of the Catholic system contributed vastly to its advancement. The leading features of this system are now to be illustrated.

[1] But the presiding elders now began generally to be called bishops.

[2] Thus, though, as we may infer from the testimony of Tertullian, Christianity was planted in North Britain in the second century, the universal tradition is that originally there were no bishops in that country. According to an ancient MS. belonging to the former bishops of St. Andrews, and to be found in the "Life of William Wishart," one of their number who lived in the thirteenth century, the first bishop created in Scotland was elected in A.D. 270. See Jamieson's "Culdees," pp. 100, 101.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CATHOLIC SYSTEM.

THE word *catholic*, which signifies universal or general, came into use toward the end of the second century. Its introduction indicates a new phase in the history of the ecclesiastical community. For upwards of a hundred years after its formation, the Church presented the appearance of one great and harmonious brotherhood, as false teachers had hitherto failed to create any considerable diversity of sentiment; but when many of the literati began to embrace the Gospel, the influence of elements of discord soon became obvious. These converts attempted to graft their philosophical theories on Christianity; not a few of the more unstable of the brethren, captivated by their ingenuity and eloquence, were tempted to adopt their views; and though the great mass of the disciples repudiated their adulterations of the truth, the Christian commonwealth was distracted and divided. Those who banded themselves together to maintain the unity of the Church were soon known by the designation of Catholics. "After the days of the apostles," says one of the fathers, "when heresies had burst forth, and were striving under various names to tear piecemeal and divide the Dove and the Queen of God,[1] did not the apostolic people require a name of their own whereby to mark the unity of those that were uncorrupted? . . . . There-

[1] Song of Solomon, vi. 9; Ps. xlv. 9. "Sub Apostolis nemo Catholicus vocabatur. . . . . Cum post Apostolos hæreses extitissent, diversisque nominibus columbam Dei atque reginam lacerare per partes et scindere niterentur; nonne cognomen suum ecclesia postulabat, quæ incorrupti populi distingueret unitatem?"

fore our people, when named Catholic, are separated by this title from those denominated heretics."[1]

The Catholic system, being an integral portion of the policy which invested the presiding elder with additional authority, rose contemporaneously with Prelacy. When Gnosticism was spreading so rapidly, and creating so much scandal and confusion, schism upon schism appeared unavoidable. How was the Church to be kept from going to pieces? How could its unity be best conserved? How could it contend most successfully against its subtle and restless disturbers? Such were the problems which occupied the attention of its leading ministers. It was thought that all these difficulties were solved by the adoption of the Catholic system. Were the Church, it was said, to place more power in the hands of individuals, and to consolidate its influence, it could bear down more effectively on the errorists. Every chief pastor of the Catholic Church was the symbol of the unity of his own ecclesiastical district; and the associated bishops represented the unity of the whole body of the faithful. According to the Catholic system, when strictly carried out, every individual excommunicated by one bishop was excommunicated by all, so that when a heresiarch was excluded from fellowship in one city, he could not be received elsewhere. The visible unity of the Church was the great principle which the Catholic system sought to realize. "The Church," says Cyprian, "which is catholic and one, is not separated or divided, but is in truth connected and joined together by the cement of bishops mutually cleaving to each other."[2]

The funds of the Church were placed very early in the hands of the president of the presbytery;[3] and though they may not have been at his absolute disposal, he soon found means of sustaining his authority by means of his monetary influence. But the power which he possessed, as the recognized centre of ecclesiastical unity, to prevent any of his elders or deacons from performing any official act of which he disapproved, constituted

[1] Pacian, "Epist. to Sympronian," secs. 5 and 8. Pacian was bishop of Barcelona. He died A.D. 392.

[2] Epist. lxix., 265, 266.

[3] Justin Martyr, Opera, p. 99.

one of the essential features of the Catholic system. "The right to administer baptism," says Tertullian, "belongs to the chief priest—that is, the bishop; then to the presbyters and the deacons,[1] yet not without the authority of the bishop, *for the honor of the Church*, which being preserved, peace is preserved."[2] Here, the origin of Catholicism is pretty distinctly indicated; for the prerogatives of the bishop are described, not as matters of divine right, but of ecclesiastical arrangement.[3] They were given to him "for the honor of the Church," that peace might be preserved when heretics began to cause divisions.

Though the bishop could give permission to others to celebrate divine ordinances, he was himself their chief administrator. He was generally the only preacher; he usually dispensed baptism;[4] and he presided at the observance of the Eucharist. At Rome, where the Catholic system was maintained most scrupulously, his presence was considered necessary to the due consecration of the elements. Hence, at one time, the sacramental symbols were carried from the cathedral church to all the places of Christian worship throughout the city.[5] With such minute care did the Roman chief pastor endeavor to disseminate the doctrine that whoever was not in communion with the bishop was out of the Church.

The establishment of a close connection, between certain

[1] According to the "Apostolic Constitutions" the deacons were not at liberty to baptize. Lib. viii., c. 28.

[2] "De Baptismo," c. 17.

[3] Tertullian thus corroborates the testimony of Jerome.

[4] "In the sixth century the clergy of Italy complained to Justinian that, *owing to the vacancy of sees*, 'an immense multitude of people died without baptism.' Even so late as the time of Hincmar (the ninth century) baptisms were still performed by the bishop, and *they alone were considered canonical*."—*Palmer's Episcopacy Vindicated*, p. 35, note.

[5] "It appears to have been the custom at Rome and other places to send from the cathedral church the bread consecrated to the several parish churches."—*Stillingfleet's Irenicum*, pp. 369, 370. "Thomassinus shows that in the fifth century the presbyters of Rome did not consecrate the Eucharist in their respective churches, but it was sent to them from the principal church."—*Palmer*, p. 35, note.

large Christian associations and the smaller societies around them, constituted the next link in the organization of the Catholic system. These communities, being generally related as mother and daughter churches, were already prepared to adapt themselves to the new type of ecclesiastical polity. The apostles, or their immediate disciples, had founded congregations in most of the great cities of the Empire; and every society thus instituted, now distinguished by the designation of the principal[1] or apostolic Church, became a centre of ecclesiastical unity. Its presiding minister sent the Eucharist to the teachers of the little flocks in his vicinity, to signify that he acknowledged them as brethren;[2] and every pastor who thus enjoyed communion with the principal Church was recognized as a Catholic bishop. This parent establishment was considered a bulwark which protected all the Christian communities surrounding it from heresy, and they were consequently expected to be guided by its traditions. "It is manifest," says Tertullian, "that all doctrine, which agrees with these apostolic Churches, THE WOMBS AND ORIGINALS OF THE FAITH,[3] must be accounted true, as without doubt containing that which the Churches have received from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, Christ from God; and that all other doctrine must be judged at once to be false, which savors of things contrary to the truth of the Churches, and of the apostles, and of Christ, and of God. . . . . Go through the apostolic Churches, in which the very *seats of the apostles, at this very day, preside over their own places*,[4] in which their own authentic writings are read, speaking with the voice of each, and making the face of each

[1] Thus Rome it called the "principal Church" in regard to Carthage. Cyprian, Epist. lv., p. 183.

[2] Tertullian refers to this when he says, "Una omnes probant unitate *communicatio pacis* et appellatio fraternitatis, et contesseratio hospitalitatis." —*De Præscrip.*, c. 20.

[3] "Ecclesiis apostolicis matricibus et originalibus fidei." See also Tertullian against Marcion (book iv., c. 35) where Jerusalem is called "*the womb of reli*ion."

[4] "Cathedræ apostolorum suis locis præsident." These words clearly indicate that the Churches founded by the apostles were now recognized as centres of unity for the surrounding Christian communities.

present to the eye. Is Achaia near to you? You have Corinth. If you are not far from Macedonia, you have Philippi, you have the Thessalonians.[1] If you can travel into Asia, you have Ephesus. But if you are near to Italy you have Rome, where we also have an authority close at hand."[2]

But the Catholic system was not yet complete. In every congregation the bishop or pastor was the centre of unity, and in every district the principal or apostolic Church bound together the smaller Christian societies; but how were the apostolic Churches themselves to be united? This question did not long remain without a solution.[3] Had the Church of Jerusalem, when the Catholic system was first organized, still occupied its ancient position, it might have established a better title to precedence than any other ecclesiastical community in existence. It had been, beyond all controversy, the mother Church of Christendom. But it had been recently dissolved, and a new society, composed, to a great extent, of new members, was now in process of formation in the new city of Aelia. Meanwhile the Church of Rome had been rapidly acquiring strength, and its connection with the seat of government pointed it out as the appropriate head of the

[1] It is worthy of note that, in the second canonical epistle ever written by Paul, he warns this Church of the coming of the Man of Sin (2 Thess. ii. 3). It appears from the text that thus early it was identified with the system which resulted in the establishment of the Papacy. It is equally remarkable that the Bishop of Thessalonica was the first *Papal Vicar* ever appointed. See Bower's "History of the Popes," Damasus, thirty-sixth bishop; and Gieseler, i. 264.

[2] "De Præscrip." xxi., xxxvi.

[3] The tendency of "Church principles" to terminate in the recognition of a universal bishop has appeared in modern as well as in ancient times. "What other step," says a noble author, "remains to stand between those who hold those principles and Rome? *Only one:* that the priesthood so constituted, invested with such powers, is organized under one head—a Pope. . . . . The space to be traversed in arriving at it is so narrow, and so unimpeded by any positive barrier, *either of logic or of feeling*, that the slightest influence of sentiment or imagination, of weakness or of superstition, is sufficient to draw men across."—*Letter from the Duke of Argyll to the Bishop of Oxford*, p. 23. London, Moxon, 1851.

Catholic confederation.[1] If the greatest convenience of the greatest number of Churches were to be taken into account, it had claims of peculiar potency, for it was easily accessible by sea or land from all parts of the Empire, and it had facilities for keeping up communication with the provinces to which no other society could pretend. Nor were these its only recommendations. It had, as was alleged, been watered by the ministry of two or three[2] of the apostles, so that, even as an apostolic Church, it had high pretensions. In addition to all this, it had, more than once, sustained with extraordinary constancy the first and fiercest brunt of persecution; and if its members had so signalized themselves in the army of martyrs, why should not its bishop lead the van of the Catholic Church? Such considerations urged in favor of a community already distinguished by its wealth, as well as by its charity, were amply sufficient to establish its claim as the centre of Catholic unity. If the arrangement was concocted in Rome itself, they must have been felt to be irresistible. Hence Irenæus, writing about A.D. 180, speaks of it even then as the recognized head of the Churches of the Empire. "To this Church," says he, "because it is more potentially principal, it is necessary that every Catholic Church should go, as in it the apostolic tradition has by the Catholics been always preserved."[3]

Many Protestant writers have attempted to explain away the meaning of this remarkable passage, but the candid student of history is bound to listen respectfully to its testimony. When we assign to the words of Irenæus all the significance of which they are susceptible, they only attest the fact that, in the latter half of the second century, the Church of Rome was acknowledged by one who had been specially indebted to its bounty, as the most potent of all the apostolic Churches. And in the same place the grounds of its pre-eminence are

[1] This is the reason assigned for the Primacy of Rome in the 28th Canon of the Council of Chalcedon, held A.D. 451.

[2] Tertullian says that John, as well as Peter and Paul, had been in Rome. "De Præscrip." xxxvi.

[3] "Contra Hæres," iii., c. iii., § 2.

enumerated pretty fully by the pastor of Lyons. It was the most ancient Church in the West of Europe; it was also the most populous; like a city set upon a hill, it was known to all; and it was reputed, by its admirers, to have had for its founders the most illustrious of the inspired heralds of the cross, the apostle of the Gentiles, and the apostle of the circumcision.[1] It was more "potentially principal," because it was itself the principal of the apostolic or principal Churches.

It has been already stated that every principal bishop,[2] or presiding minister of an apostolic Church, sent the Eucharist to the pastors around him as a pledge of their ecclesiastical fellowship; and the bishop of Rome kept up intercourse with the other bishops of the apostolic Churches by transmitting to them the same symbol of catholicity.[3] The sacred elements were conveyed by confidential churchmen, who served, at the same time, as channels of communication between the great prelate and the more influential of his brethren. By this means the communion of the whole Catholic Church was constantly maintained.

When the Catholic system was set up, and the bishop of Rome recognized as its Head, he was not supposed to possess, in his new position, any arbitrary or despotic authority. He was simply understood to hold among pastors the place which had previously been occupied by the senior elder in the presbytery—that is, he was the president or moderator. The theoretical parity of all bishops, the chief pastor of Rome included, was a principle long jealously asserted.[4] But the prelate of the capital was the individual to whom other bishops addressed themselves respecting all matters affecting the general

[1] "Maximæ et antiquissimæ et omnibus cognitæ, a gloriosissimis duobus apostolis Petro et Paulo Romæ fundatæ et constitutæ ecclesiæ."—*Irenæus*, iii., c. iii., § 2.

[2] We find this designation in some of the early canons. See Bunsen's "Hippolytus," iii. 50.

[3] Euseb. v. 24.

[4] See the statement of Cyprian in the Council of Carthage, "Opera," p. 597; and Jerome, in his Epistle to Evangelus, "Opera," iv., secund. pars, p. 803.

interests of the ecclesiastical community; he collected their sentiments; and he announced the decisions of their united wisdom. It was, however, scarcely possible for an official in his circumstances either to satisfy all parties or to keep within the limits of his legitimate power. When his personal feelings were known to run strongly in a particular channel, the minority, to whom he was opposed, at least suspected him of attempting domination. Hence it was that by those who were discontented with his policy he was tauntingly designated, as early as the beginning of the third century, The Supreme Pontiff, and The Bishop of Bishops.[1] These titles can not be gravely quoted as proofs of the existence of the claims which they indicate; for they were employed ironically by malcontents who wished thus either to impeach his partiality, or to condemn his interference. But they supply clear evidence that his growing influence was beginning to be formidable, and that he already stood at the head of the ministers of Christendom.

The preceding statements enable us to understand why the interests of Rome and of the Catholic Church have always been identified. The metropolis of Italy has, in fact, from the beginning been the heart of the Catholic system. In ancient times Roman statesmen were noted for their skill in fitting up the machinery of political government: Roman churchmen have labored no less successfully in the department of ecclesiastical organization. The Catholic system is a wonderful specimen of constructive ability; and the same city which produced Prelacy, also gave birth, about the same time, to this masterpiece of human contrivance. This fact may be established, as well by other evidences, as by the positive testimony of Cyprian. The bishop of Carthage, who flourished only about a century after it appeared, was connected with that quarter of the Church in which it originated. We can not, therefore, reasonably reject the depositions of so com-

[1] "Pontifex scilicet Maximus, quod est episcopus episcoporum, edicit: Ego et mœchiæ et fornicationis delicta pœnitentia functis dimitto."—*Tertullian, De Pudicitia*, c. 1. "Neque enim quisquam nostrum episcopum se esse episcoporum constituit."—*Cyprian, Con. Car., Opera*, 597.

petent a witness, more especially when he speaks so frequently and so confidently of its source. When he describes the Roman bishopric as "*the root* and *womb* of *the Catholic Church*,"[1] his language admits of no second interpretation. He was well aware that the Church of Jerusalem was the root and womb of all the apostolic Churches; and when he employs such phraseology, he refers to some new phase of Christianity which had originated in the capital of the Empire. In another place he speaks of "the see of Peter, and the principal Church, *whence the unity of the priesthood took its rise*."[2] Such statements shut us up to the conclusion that Rome was the source and centre from which Catholicism radiated.

This system was only gradually developed, and nearly half a century elapsed before it acquired such maturity that it attained a distinctive designation.[3] But as it was currently believed to be admirably adapted to the exigencies of the Church, it spread with much rapidity; and in less than a hundred years after its rise, its influence may be traced in almost all parts of the Empire. We thus explain a historical phenomenon which is otherwise unaccountable. Toward the close of the second and throughout the whole of the third century, ecclesiastical writers connected with various and distant provinces refer with peculiar respect to the Apostle Peter,

[1] "Ecclesiæ catholicæ radicem et matricem."—*Epist.* xlv., p. 133.

[2] "Navigare audent et ad Petri cathedram atque ad ecclesiam principalem unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est."—*Epist.* lv., p. 183. "Nam Petro primum Dominus, super quem ædificavit ecclesiam, et unde unitatis originem instituit et ostendit, potestatem istam dedit."—*Epist.* lxxiii., p. 280. See also *Epist.* lxx.—"Una ecclesia a Christo Domino super Petrum origine unitatis et ratione fundata."

[3] The word *catholic* first occurs in the Epistle of the Church of Smyrna, giving an account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, but that letter was not written until at least twenty years after the event which it records. See Period ii., sec. i., chap. iv., p. 306. It is remarkable that the word is not found in Irenæus, or used by his Latin interpreter. The pastor of Lyons, however, recognizes the distinction indicated by the word catholic, for he speaks of the *ecclesiastici*, or churchmen, and of those "*qui sunt undique*." Stieren's "Irenæus," i. 430, 502, note. The word catholic was quite current in the time of Tertullian.

and even appeal to Scripture[1] with a view to his exaltation. Their misinterpretations of the Word reveal an extreme anxiety to obtain something like an inspired warrant for their catholicism. The visible unity of the Church was deemed by them essential to its very existence, and the Roman see was the actual key-stone of the Catholic structure. Hence every friend of orthodoxy imagined it to be, as well his duty as his interest, to uphold the claims of the supposed representative of Peter, and thus to maintain the cause of ecclesiastical unity. It was to be anticipated under such circumstances that Scripture would be miserably perverted, and that the see, which was believed to possess as its heritage the prerogatives of the apostle of the circumcision, would be the subject of extravagant laudation.

Ambition has been often represented as the great principle which guided the policy of the early Roman bishops; but there is no evidence that, as a class, they were inferior in piety to other churchmen; and the readiness with which some of them suffered for the faith attests their Christian sincerity and resolution. Ambition soon began to operate; but their elevation was not so much the result of any deep-laid scheme for their aggrandizement, as of a series of circumstances pushing them into prominence, and placing them in a most influential position. The efforts of heretics to create division led to a reaction, and tempted the Church to adopt arrangements for preserving union by which its liberties were eventually compromised. The bishop of Rome found himself almost immediately at the head of the Catholic league; and, before the close of the second century, he was acknowledged as the chief pastor of Christendom. About that time we see him writing letters to some of the most distinguished bishops of the East,[2]

[1] Particularly Matt. xvi. 18. Clemens Alexandrinus says that our Lord baptized Peter only, and that Peter then baptized other apostles. See Kaye's "Clement," p. 442; and Bunsen's "Analecta Antenic.," i. p. 317. See also Origen, "Opera," ii. 245; and Firmilian's "Epistle."

[2] Even Polycrates of Ephesus admits that he had been requested by Victor to convene a synod. Euseb. v. 24. About sixty years afterward Cyprian writes to Stephen of Rome requesting him to send letters into Gaul that

directing them to call councils; and it does not appear that his epistles were deemed unwarranted or officious. Unity of doctrine was speedily connected with unity of discipline, and an opinion gradually prevailed that the Church Catholic should exhibit universal uniformity. When Victor differed from the Asiatic bishops relative to the mode of observing the Paschal festival, he was only seeking to realize the idea of unity; and, as the Head of the Catholic Church, he might have carried out against them his threat of excommunication, had he not in this particular case been moving in advance of public opinion. When Stephen, sixty years afterward, disputed with Cyprian and others concerning the rebaptism of heretics, he was still endeavoring to work out the same unity; and the bishop of Carthage found himself involved in contradictions when he proceeded at once to assert his independence, and to concede to the see of Peter the honor which, as he admitted, it could legitimately challenge.[1]

The theory of Catholicism is based on principles thoroughly fallacious. Assuming that visible unity in one organization is essential to the Church on earth, it sanctions the startling inference that whoever is not connected with a certain ecclesiastical society must be out of the pale of salvation. The most grinding spiritual tyranny ever known has been erected on this foundation. And yet how hollow is the whole system! It is no more necessary that all the children of God in this world should belong to the same visible Church than that all the children of men should be connected with the same earthly monarchy. All believers are "one in Christ"; they have all "one Lord, one faith, one baptism"; but "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation," and the unity of the saints on earth can be discerned only by the eye of Omniscience.

Marcianus the bishop, who had sided with Novatian, "being excommunicated, another may be substituted in his room."—*Cyprian, Epist.* lxvii., pp. 248, 249.

[1] Thus he says: "For neither did Peter, *whom the Lord chose first, and on whom He built His Church,* when Paul afterward disputed with him about circumcision, claim or assume anything insolently and arrogantly to himself, so as *to say that he held the primacy.*"—*Epist.* lxxi., p. 273.

They are all sustained by the same living bread which cometh down from heaven, but they may receive their spiritual provision as members of ten thousand separated Churches. All who truly love the Saviour are united to Him by a link which can never be broken; and no ecclesiastical barrier can either exclude them from His presence here, or shut them out from His fellowship hereafter. But a number of men may as well propose to appropriate all the light of the sun or all the winds of heaven, as attempt to form themselves into a privileged society with a monopoly of the means of salvation.

The Church of Rome is understood to be the spiritual Babylon of the Apocalypse, and yet one point of correspondence between the type and the antitype has been hitherto overlooked. The great city of Babylon commenced with the erection of Babel, and the builders said, "Go to, let us build us a city, and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."[1] Civil unity was avowedly the end designed by these architects. Amongst other purposes contemplated by the famous tower, it appears to have been intended to serve as a centre of Catholicity—a great rallying point or landmark—by which every citizen might be guided homewards when he lost his way in the plain of Shinar. In the "Pastor of Hermas," perhaps the first work written in Rome after the establishment of Prelacy, the Church is described under the similitude of a tower![2] When Hyginus "established the gradations,' the hierarchy at once assumed that appearance. And the see of Peter, the centre of Catholic unity, was to be the great spiritual landmark to guide the steps of all true churchmen. The ecclesiastical builders prospered for a time; but when Constantine had finished a new metropolis in the East, some symptoms of disunion revealed themselves. When the Empire was afterward divided, jealousies increased; the builders could not understand one another's speech; and the Church at length witnessed the great schism of the Greeks and the Latins. In due time the Reformation interfered still

[1] Gen. xi. 4. [2] Book i., vision iii., § 3, etc.

more vexatiously with the building of the ecclesiastical Babel. But this more recent schism has given a mighty impulse to the cause of freedom, of civilization, and of truth; for the Protestants, scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth, have been spreading far and wide the light of the Gospel. The builders of Babel still continue their work, but their boasted unity is gone forever; and now, with the exception of their political manœuvring, their highest achievements are literally in the department of stone and mortar. They may found costly edifices, and erect spires pointing, like the tower of Babel, to the skies; but they can no longer reasonably hope to bind together the liberated nations with the chains of a gigantic despotism, or induce worshippers of all kindreds and tongues to adopt the one dead language of Latin superstition. The signs of the times indicate that the remnant of the Catholic workmen must soon "leave off to build the city." The final overthrow of the mystical Babylon will usher in the millennium of the Church, and the present success of Protestant missions is premonitory of the approaching doom of Romish ritualism. It is written: "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."[1]

[1] Rev. xiv. 6–8.

CHAPTER IX.

PRIMITIVE EPISCOPACY AND PRESBYTERIAN ORDINATION.

IT has been already stated that, except in a few great cities where there were several Christian congregations, the introduction of Episcopacy produced a very slight change in the appearance of the ecclesiastical community. In towns and villages, where the disciples constituted but a single flock, they had commonly only one teaching elder; and as, in accordance with apostolic rule,[1] this laborer in the word and doctrine was deemed worthy of double honor, he was already the most prominent and influential member of the brotherhood. The new arrangement merely clothed him with the name of *bishop*, and somewhat augmented his authority. Having the funds of the Church at his disposal, he had special influence; and though he could not well act without the sanction of his elders, he could easily contrive to negative any of their resolutions which did not meet his approval.

It is abundantly clear that this primitive dignitary was ordinarily the pastor of only a single congregation. "If, before the multitude increase, there be a place having a few faithful men in it, to the extent of twelve, who are able to make a dedication to pious uses for a bishop, let them write to the Churches round about the place," says an ancient canon, "that three chosen men . . . . may come to examine with diligence him who has been thought worthy of this degree. . . . . If he has not a wife, it is a good thing; but if he has married a wife, having children, let him abide with her, continuing steadfast in every doctrine, able to explain the Scriptures well."[2] This humble functionary was assisted in the management of his

[1] 1 Tim. v. 17. [2] See Bunsen's "Hippolytus," ii. 305, and iii. 35, 36.

little flock by two or three elders. "If the bishop has attended to the knowledge and patience of the love of God," says another regulation, "let him ordain two presbyters, when he has examined them, or rather three."[1] The bishop, the elders, and the deacons, all assembled in one place every Lord's day for congregational worship. An old ecclesiastical law accordingly prescribes the following arrangement: "Let the seat of the bishop be placed in the midst, and let the presbyters sit on each side of him, and let the deacons stand by them, ... and let it be their care that the people sit with all quietness and order in the other part of the Church."[2] Thus, except in the case of a few large towns, the primitive bishop was simply the parochial minister.

Toward the close of the second century, the *bishop* and the *teacher* were designations of the same import. Speaking of those at the head of the Churches, Irenæus describes them as distinguished by their superior or inferior ability in sermonizing;[3] and a well-informed writer, who flourished as late as the fourth century, mentions preaching as the bishop's peculiar function.[4] In the apostolic age every one who had popular gifts was permitted to edify the congregation by their exercise;[5] and, long afterward, any elder who was qualified to speak in the Church, was at liberty to address his fellow-worshippers. When Origen, prior to his ordination as a presbyter, ventured to expound the Scriptures publicly at the request of the bishops of Palestine, Demetrius, his own ecclesiastical superior, denounced his conduct as irregular; but the parties by whom the learned Alexandrian had been invited to lecture, boldly vindicated the proceeding. He (Demetrius) has asserted, said they, "that this was never before either heard or done, that laymen should deliver discourses in the presence of bishops. We know not how it happens that he is here evidently so far from the truth. For, indeed, wherever there are

[1] Bunsen's "Hippolytus," iii. 36.

[2] "Apost. Constit.," ii. 57.

[3] Καὶ οὔτε ὁ πάνυ δυνατὸς ἐν λόγῳ τῶν ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις προεστώτων, ἕτερα τούτων ἐρεῖ (οὐδεὶς γὰρ ὑπὲρ τὸν διδάσκαλον) οὔτε ὁ ἀσθενὴς ἐν τῷ λόγῳ ἐλαττώσει τὴν παράδοσιν.—*Contra Hæreses*, i., c. 10, § 2.

[4] "Optatus adv. Donat.," vii. 6.

[5] 1 Cor. xiv. 5, 24, 26, 31.

found those qualified to benefit the brethren, they are exhorted by the holy bishops to address the people."[1] But still the bishop himself was the stated and ordinary preacher; and when he was sick or absent, the flock could seldom expect a sermon. When present, he always administered the Lord's Supper with his own hands, and dispensed in person the rite of baptism. He also occupied the chair at the meetings of the presbytery, and presided at the ordination of the elders and deacons of his congregation.

Though Christians formed but a fraction, and often but a small fraction, of the population, their bishops were thickly planted. Thus Cenchrea, the port of Corinth, had an episcopal overseer,[2] as well as Corinth itself; the bishop of Portus and the bishop of Ostia were only two miles asunder;[3] and of the eighty-seven bishops who met at Carthage, about A.D. 256, to discuss the question of the rebaptism of heretics, many, such as Mannulus, Polianus, Dativus, and Secundinus,[4] were located in small towns or villages. Though, probably, some of these pastors had not the care of more than twenty or thirty Christian families, each had the same rank and authority as the bishop of Carthage. "It remains," said Cyprian at the opening of the council, "that we severally declare our opinion on this same subject, judging no one, nor depriving any one of the right of communion if he differ from us. For no one of us sets himself up as a bishop of bishops, or by tyrannical terror forces his colleagues to a necessity of obeying; inasmuch as every bishop in the free use of his liberty and power has the right of forming his own judgment."[5] In other quarters of the Church its episcopal guardians were equally numerous.

[1] Euseb. vi. 19. It is to be observed that these laymen, having the sanction of the ecclesiastical authorities, were thus virtually licensed to preach.

[2] "Apost. Constit." vii. 46. There was a Church at Cenchrea in the time of the apostles. Rom. xvi. 1. Strabo calls Cenchrea a village, lib. viii.

[3] See Bingham, iii. 129.

[4] Cyprian, "Council of Carthage." Girba, Mileum, Badias, and Carpi, the sees of these bishops, were all small places, with a still smaller Christian population.

[5] Cyprian, "Council of Carthage."

Hence it is said of the famous Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch, that, to sustain his reputaion, he instigated "the bishops of the adjacent rural districts and towns" to praise him in their addresses to the people.[1] Even so late as the middle of the third century, the jurisdiction of the greatest bishops was extremely limited. Cyprian of Carthage, in point of position the second prelate in the Western Church, presided over only eight or nine presbyters;[2] and Cornelius of Rome, confessedly the most influential ecclesiastic in Christendom, had the charge of probably not more than fourteen congregations.[3]

There were commonly several elders and deacons connected with every worshipping society; and though these, as well as the bishops, began, toward the close of the second century, to be called clergymen,[4] and were thus taught to cherish the idea that the Lord was their inheritance, it would be quite a mistake to infer that they all subsisted on their official income. Not a few of them probably derived their maintenance from secular employments—some of them being tradesmen or artisans, and others in stations of greater prominence. Hyacinthus, an elder of the Church of Rome in the time of bishop Victor, appears to have held a situation in the Imperial household,[5] and Tertullian complains that persons engaged in trades directly connected with the support of idolatry were promoted to ecclesiastical offices.[6] There was a time when even an apostle labored as a tent-maker, but as the hierarchical spirit acquired strength, and as the Church increased in wealth and

[1] Euseb. vii. 30.

[2] See Sage's "Vindication of the Principles of the Cyprianic Age," p. 348. Edit., London, 1701.

[3] See Period ii., sec. i., chap. v., pp. 323, 324.

[4] See Bingham, i. 41, 43.

[5] Bunsen's "Hippolytus," i. 129; and Wordsworth, p. 257. It would appear from Celsus that not a few of the Church teachers in the second century supported themselves by manual labor. See Origen, Opera, i. 484.

[6] "Adleguntur in ordinem ecclesiasticum artifices idolorum."—*De Idololatria*, c. vii. Malchion, one of the presbyters of Antioch in the time of Paul of Samosata, was the head master of one of the principal schools in the place. Euseb. vii. 29.

numbers, there was a growing impression that all its office-bearers were degraded by such services. Cyprian speaks with extreme bitterness of a deceased presbyter who had appointed a brother elder the executor of his will, declaring that the clergy "should in no ways be called off from their holy ministrations, nor tied down by secular troubles and business."[1] But the common sense of the Church revolted against such high-flown spiritualism, as in many districts where the disciples were still few and indigent, they could not afford a suitable support for all intrusted with the performance of ecclesiastical duties. Hence, before the recognition of Christianity by Constantine, even bishops in some countries were permitted by trade to eke out a scanty maintenance. "Let not bishops, elders, and deacons leave their places for the sake of trading," says a council held in the beginning of the fourth century, "nor travelling about the provinces let them be found dealing in fairs. However, *to provide a living for themselves*, let them send either a son or a freedman, or a servant, or a friend, or any one else; and if they wish to trade, let them do so within their province."[2]

It is clear, from the New Testament, that, in the apostolic age, ordination was performed by "the laying on of the hands of the presbytery," and this mode of designation to the ministry continued until some time in the third century. We are informed by the most learned of the fathers, in a passage to which the attention of the reader has already been invited,[3] that "even at Alexandria, from Mark the Evangelist until Heraclas and Dionysius the bishops, the presbyters were always in the habit of naming as bishop one chosen from among themselves and placed in a higher degree, in the same manner as the army make an emperor, or the deacons choose from among themselves one whom they know to be industrious, and call him archdeacon."[4] As Jerome here mentions various important

[1] Cyprian, Epist. lxvi., p. 246. In after-times the bishop himself was the grand-executor, having the charge of all the wills of his diocese!

[2] Council of Elvira, A.D. 305, 18th canon.

[3] Period ii., sec. iii., chap. vi., p. 531.

[4] "Nam et Alexandriæ à Marco Evangelista usque ad Heraclam et Dio-

facts of which we must have otherwise remained ignorant, and as this statement throws much light on the ecclesiastical history of the early Church, it is entitled to special notice.

In the letter where this passage occurs the writer is extolling the dignity of presbyters, and endeavoring to show that they are very little inferior to bishops. He admits, indeed, that, in his own days, they had ceased to ordain; but he intimates that they once possessed the right, and that they retained it in all its integrity till the former part of the preceding century. Some have thought that Jerome has here expressed himself indefinitely, and that he did not know the exact date at which the arrangement he describes ceased at Alexandria. But his testimony, when fairly analyzed, can scarcely be said to want precision; for he obviously speaks of Heraclas and Dionysius as bishops *by anticipation*, alleging that a custom which anciently existed among the elders of the Egyptian metropolis was maintained until the time when these ecclesiastics, who afterward successively occupied the episcopal chair, sat together in the presbytery. The period, thus pointed out, can be easily ascertained. Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, after a long official life of forty-three years, died about A.D. 232,[1] and it is well known that Heraclas and Dionysius were both members of his presbytery toward the close of his episcopal administration. It was, therefore, shortly before his demise that the new system was introduced. In certain parts of the Church the arrangement mentioned by Jerome probably continued somewhat longer. Cyprian hints at such cases of exception when he says that in "*almost* all the provinces,"[2] the

nysium Episcopos, presbyteri semper unum ex se electum, in excelsiori gradu collocatum Episcopum nominabant; quomodo si exercitus Imperatorem faciat; aut Diaconi eligant de se quem industrium noverint, et Archidiaconum vocent."—*Epist., ad Evangelum.*

[1] Heraclas now succeeded him. The immediate successor of Heraclas was Dionysius.

[2] "*Apud nos* quoque et *fere* per provincias universas tenetur."—*Cyprian*, Epist. lxviii., p. 256. The arrangement of which Cyprian speaks was now, perhaps, pretty generally established in the West, but he may have understood, through his intercourse with Firmilian, that in some parts of the East a different usage still prevailed.

neighboring bishops assembled, on the occasion of an episcopal vacancy, at the new election and ordination. In a few of the more considerable towns, the elders still continued to nominate their president.

When the erudite Roman presbyter informs us that "*even* at Alexandria"[1] the elders formerly made their own bishop, his language implies that such a mode of creating the chief pastor was not confined to the Church of the metropolis of Egypt. It existed wherever Christianity had gained a footing, and he mentions this particular see, partly, because of its importance—being, in point of rank, the second in the Empire—and partly, perhaps, because the remarkable circumstances in its history, leading to the alteration which he specifies, were known to all his well-informed contemporaries. Jerome does not say that the Alexandrian presbyters inducted their bishop by imposition of hands,[2] or set him apart to his office by any formal ordination. His words indicate that they did not recognize the necessity of any special right of investiture; that they made the bishop by election; and that, when once acknowledged as the object of their choice, he was at liberty to enter forthwith on the performance of his episcopal duties. When the Roman soldiers made an emperor they appointed him by acclamation, and the cheers which issued from their ranks as he stood up before the legions and as he was clothed with the purple by one of themselves, constituted the ceremony of his inauguration. The ancient archdeacon was

[1] "Nam *et* Alexandriæ."

[2] Eutychius, the celebrated patriarch of Alexandria who flourished in the beginning of the tenth century, makes this assertion. According to this writer there were originally twelve presbyters connected with the Alexandrian Church; and, when the patriarchate became vacant they elected "one of the twelve presbyters, *on whose head the remaining eleven laid hands*, and blessed him and created him patriarch."—*See the original passage in Selden's Works*, ii., c. 421, 422; London, 1726. This passage furnishes a remarkable confirmation of the testimony of Jerome as to the fact that the Alexandrian presbyters originally made their bishops, but it is not very accurate as to the details. As to the laying on of hands it is not supported by Jerome.

still one of the deacons;[1] as he was the chief almoner of the Church, he required to possess tact, discernment, and activity; and, in the fourth century, he was nominated to his office by his fellow-deacons. Jerome assures us that, until the time of Heraclas and Dionysius, the elders made a bishop just in the same way as in his own day the soldiers made an emperor, or as the deacons chose one whom they knew to be industrious, and made him an archdeacon.

In one of the letters purporting to have been written by Pius, bishop of Rome, to Justus of Vienne, shortly after the middle of the second century, there is a passage which supplies a singularly striking confirmation of the testimony of Jerome. Even admitting that the genuineness of this epistle can not be satisfactorily established, it must still be acknowledged to be a very ancient document, and were it of somewhat later date than its title indicates, it should at least be received as representing the traditions which prevailed respecting the ecclesiastical arrangements of an early antiquity. In this communication Pius speaks of his episcopal correspondent of Vienne as "*constituted by the brethren* and clothed with the dress of the bishops."[2] By "the brethren," as is plain from another part of the letter,[3] he understands the presbytery. And as the soldiers made a sovereign by saluting him emperor, and arraying him in the purple: so the presbyters made a president by clothing him with a certain piece of dress, and calling him bishop. Thus, the statement of Jerome is exactly corroborated by the evidence of this witness.

We may infer from the letter of Pius that in Gaul and Italy, as well as in Egypt, the elders were in the habit of making their own bishop.[4] There is not a particle of evidence to show that any other arrangement originally existed. The declaration of so competent an authority as Jerome, backed

[1] The case is different with the modern English archdeacon who is a presbyter.

[2] "A fratribus constitutus et colobio episcoporum vestitus."

[3] "Saluta *omne collegium fratrum*, qui tecum sunt in Domino."

[4] The practice continued longer at Alexandria than at Rome and various other places.

by the attestation of this ancient epistle, may be regarded as perfectly conclusive.[1] But other proofs of the same fact are not wanting. For a long period the bishop continued to be known by the title of "the elder who presides"—a designation which obviously implies that he was still only one of the presbyters. When the Paschal controversy created such excitement, and when Victor of Rome threatened to renounce the communion of those who held views different from his own, Irenæus of Lyons wrote a letter of remonstrance to the haughty churchman in which he broadly reminded him of his ecclesiastical position. "*Those presbyters* before Soter *who governed* the Church over which you now preside, I mean," said he, "Anicetus, and Pius, Hyginus with Telesphorus and Xystus, neither did themselves observe, nor did they permit those after them to observe it. . . . . But those *very presbyters* before you who did not observe it, sent the Eucharist to those of Churches which did."[2] Irenæus here endeavors to teach the bishop of Rome a lesson of humility by reminding him repeatedly that he and his predecessors were but presbyters.

The pastor of Lyons speaks even still more distinctly respecting the status of the bishops who flourished in his generation. Thus, he says: "We should obey those presbyters in the Church who have the succession from the apostles, and who, *with the succession of the episcopate*, have received the cer-

[1] The statement of Jerome is not inconsistent with the fact that the senior elder was originally the president or bishop, for he was recognized as such by mutual agreement. Neither is it at variance with the idea that the elders sometimes made a selection *by lot* out of three of their number previously put in nomination. Even after bishops began to be elected by general suffrage, the people were in some places restricted to certain candidates chosen from among the elders by lot. Cyprian apparently refers to this circumstance when he says that he was chosen *by "the judgment of God"* as well as by the vote of the people. Epist. xl., p. 119. The people of Alexandria, toward the close of the third and beginning of the fourth century, were restricted to certain candidates. See pp. 302, 303, Period ii., sec. i., chap. iv. Cornelius of Rome is said to have been made bishop by "the judgment of God and of his Christ" and by the votes of the people. Cyprian, Epist lii., pp. 150, 151.

[2] Euseb. v. 24.

tain gift of truth according to the good pleasure of the Father: but we should hold as suspected or as heretics and of bad sentiments the rest who depart from the principal succession, and meet together wherever they please. . . . . From all such we must keep aloof, but we must adhere to those who both preserve, as we have already mentioned, the doctrine of the apostles, and exhibit, *with the order of the presbytery*, sound teaching and an inoffensive conversation."[1] "The order of the presbytery," obviously signifies the official character conveyed by "the laying on of the hands of the presbytery," and yet such was the ordination of those who, in the time of Irenæus, possessed "the succession from the apostles" and "the succession of the episcopate."

Some imagine that no one can be properly qualified to administer divine ordinances who has not received episcopal ordination, but a more accurate acquaintance with the history of the early Church is all that is required to dissipate the delusion. The preceding statements clearly show that, for upwards of one hundred and fifty years after the death of our Lord, all the Christian ministers throughout the world were ordained by presbyters. The bishops themselves were of "the order of the presbytery," and, as they had never received episcopal consecration, they could only ordain as presbyters. The bishop was, in fact, nothing more than the chief presbyter.[2] A father of the third century accordingly observes, "All power and grace are established in the Church where

[1] "Contra Hæreses," iv., c. 26, secs. 2, 4. "Quapropter eis qui in ecclesia sunt, *presbyteris* obaudire oportet, his qui successionem habent ab apostolis, sicut ostendimus; qui *cum episcopatus successione* charisma veritatis certum secundum placitum Patris acceperunt; reliquos vero, qui absistunt a principali successione, et quocunque loco colligunt, suspectos habere vel quasi hæreticos et malæ sententiæ. . . . . Ab omnibus igitur talibus absistere oportet; adhærere vero his qui et apostolorum, sicut prædiximus, doctrinam custodiunt, et *cum presbyterii ordine* sermonem sanum et conversationem sine offensa præstant."

[2] This was long the received doctrine. Thus, the author of the "Questions on the Old and New Testament" says, "Quid est episcopus nisi *primus presbyter?*"—*Aug. Quæst.*, c. 101.

elders preside, who possess the power, as well of baptizing, as of confirming and ordaining." [1]

An old ecclesiastical law, recently presented for the first time to the English reader,[2] throws much light on a portion of the history of the Church long buried in great obscurity. This law may well remind us of those remains of extinct classes of animals which the naturalist studies with so much interest, as it obviously belongs to an era even anterior to that of the so-called apostolical canons.[3] Though it is part of a series of regulations once current in the Church of Ethiopia, there is every reason to believe that it was framed in Italy, and that its authority was acknowledged by the Church of Rome in the time of Hippolytus.[4] It marks a transition period in the history of ecclesiastical polity, and whilst it indirectly confirms the testimony of Jerome relative to the custom of the Church of Alexandria, it shows that the state of things to which the learned presbyter refers was now superseded by another arrangement. This curious specimen of ancient legislation treats of the appointment and ordination of ministers. "The bishop," says this enactment, "is to be elected by all the people. . . . . And they shall choose ONE OF THE BISHOPS AND ONE OF THE PRESBYTERS, ... AND THESE SHALL LAY THEIR HANDS UPON HIS HEAD AND PRAY." [5]

[1] "Omnis potestas et gratia in ecclesia constitua sit, ubi præsident majores natu, qui et baptizandi et manum imponendi et ordinandi possident potestatem."—*Firmilian, Epist., Cyprian*, Opera, p. 304.

[2] See Bunsen's "Hippolytus," ii. 351–357. See also Fabricius, "Biblioth. Græcæ," liber v., p. 208. Hamburg, 1723.

[3] The earliest was framed only a few years before the middle of the third century. In A.D. 228, several bishops united in the ordination of the presbyter Origen (see Euseb. vi. 8, 23); whereas, according to the second of these canons, a presbyter is to be ordained "by one bishop." They were called apostolical perhaps because concocted by some of the bishops of the so-called apostolic Churches.

[4] The collection to which it belongs bears the designation of the "Canons of *Abulides*,"—the name of *Hippolytus in Abyssinian*, as their calendar shows. Bunsen, ii. 352. The canons edited by Hippolytus were, no doubt, at one time acknowledged by the Western Church.

[5] Bunsen's "Hippolytus," iii. 43, and "Analecta Antenicæna," iii. 415.

Here, to avoid the confusion arising from a whole crowd of individuals imposing hands in ordination, two were selected to act on behalf of the assembled office-bearers; and, that the parties entitled to officiate might be fairly represented, the deputies were to be a bishop and a presbyter.[1] The canon illustrates the jealousy with which the presbyters in the early part of the third century still guarded some of their rights and privileges. In the matter of investing others with Church authority, they yet maintained their original position, and though many bishops might be present when another was inducted into office, they would permit only one of the number to unite with one of themselves in the ceremony of ordination. Some at the present day do not hesitate to assert that presbyters have no right whatever to ordain, but this canon supplies evidence that in the third century they were employed to ordain bishops.

It thus appears that the bishop of the ancient Church was very different from the dignitary now known by the same designation. The primitive bishop had often but two or three elders, and sometimes a single deacon,[2] under his jurisdiction: the modern prelate has frequently the oversight of several hundreds of ministers. The ancient bishop, surrounded by his presbyters, preached ordinarily every Sabbath to his whole flock: the modern bishop may spend an entire lifetime without addressing a single sermon, on the Lord's day, to many who are under his episcopal supervision. The early bishop had the care of a parish: the modern bishop superintends a diocese. The elders of the primitive bishop were not unfrequently decent tradesmen who earned their bread by the sweat of their brow:[3] the presbyters of a modern prelate have gen-

[1] Eutychius intimates that the Alexandrian presbyters continued to ordain their own bishop until the time of the Council of Nice. It is not improbable that, until then, some of them continued to take part in the ordination, and the statement of the Alexandrian patriarch may be so far correct.

[2] See Bunsen, iii. 45.

[3] Where the bishop, as in the case contemplated in a canon quoted in the text, had to depend for his official income on the contributions of twelve families, it is plain that the elders could expect no remuneration for their

erally each the charge of a congregation, and are supposed to be entirely devoted to sacred duties. Even the ancient city bishop had but a faint resemblance to his modern namesake. He was the most laborious city minister, and the chief preacher. He commonly baptized all who were received into the Church, and dispensed the Eucharist to all the communicants. He was, in fact, properly the minister of an overgrown parish who required several assistants to supply his lack of service.

The foregoing testimonies likewise show that the doctrine of apostolical succession, as now commonly promulgated, is utterly destitute of any sound historical basis. According to some, no one is duly qualified to preach and to dispense the sacraments whose authority has not been transmitted from the Twelve by an unbroken series of episcopal ordinations. But it has been demonstrated that episcopal ordinations, properly so called, originated only in the third century, and that even the bishops of Rome, who flourished prior to that date, were "of the order of the presbytery." All the primitive bishops received nothing more than presbyterian ordination. It is plain, therefore, that the doctrine of the transmission of spiritual power from the apostles through an unbroken series of episcopal ordinations flows from sheer ignorance of the actual constitution of the early Church.

But the arrangements now described were gradually subverted by episcopal encroachments, and a separate chapter must be devoted to the illustration of the progress of Prelacy.

services. As the hierarchy advanced these ruling elders disappeared. Hence Hilary says, "The synagogue, and afterwards *the Church*, had elders, without whose counsel nothing was done in the Church, which, by what negligence *it grew into disuse* I know not; unless, perhaps, by the sloth, or rather by the pride of the teachers, while they alone wished to appear something."—*Comment. on* 1 *Tim.* v. 1. Some late writers have contended that these elders (*seniores*) were not ecclesiastical officers at all, but civil magistrates of municipal corporations peculiar to Africa. It must, however, be recollected that Hilary was a *Roman* deacon of the fourth century, and that he speaks of them as belonging *to the Church* before the civil establishment of Christianity.

CHAPTER X.

THE PROGRESS OF PRELACY.

We can not tell when the president of the presbytery began to hold office for life; but it is evident that the change, at whatever period it occurred, must have added considerably to his power. The chairman of any court is the individual through whom it is addressed, and without whose signature its proceedings can not be properly authenticated. He acts in its name, and he stands forth as its representative. He may, theoretically, possess no more power than any of the other members of the judicatory, and he may be bound, by the most stringent laws, simply to carry out the decisions of their united wisdom; but his very position gives him influence; and, if he holds office for life, that influence may soon become formidable. If he is not constantly kept in check by the vigilance and determination of those with whom he is associated, he may insensibly trench upon their rights and privileges. In the second century the moderator of the city presbytery was invariably a man advanced in years, who, instead of being watched with jealousy, was regarded with affectionate veneration; and it is not strange if he was often permitted to stretch his authority beyond the exact range of its legitimate exercise.

Evidence has already been adduced to show that, on the rise of Prelacy, the presidential chair was no longer inherited by the members of the city presbytery in the order of seniority. The individuals considered most competent for the situation were nominated by their brethren; and as the Church, especially in great towns, was sadly distracted by the machinations of the Gnostics, it was deemed expedient to arm the moder-

ator with additional authority. As a matter of necessity, the official who was furnished with these new powers required a new name; for the title *president*, by which he was already known, and which continued long afterward in current use,[1] did not now fully indicate his importance. It was, therefore, gradually supplanted by the designation *bishop*, or overseer. Whilst this functionary was nominated by the presbyters, he might be also set aside by them, so that he felt it necessary to consult their wishes and to use his discretionary power with modesty and moderation; but, when elected by general suffrage his authority was forthwith established on a broader and firmer foundation. He was now emphatically the man of the people; and from this date he possessed an influence with which the presbytery itself was incompetent to grapple.

As early as the middle of the second century the president, at least in some places, was intrusted with the chief management of the funds of the Church;[2] and probably, about fifty years afterward, a large share of its revenues was appropriated to his personal maintenance.[3] His superior wealth soon added immensely to his influence. He was thus enabled to maintain a higher position in society than any of his brethren; and he was at length regarded as the great fountain of patronage and preferment. Long before Christianity enjoyed the sanction of the State, the chief pastors of the great cities began to attract attention by their ostentatious display of secular magnificence. Origen, who flourished in the former half of the third century, strongly condemns their vanity and ambition; and though his ascetic temperament prompted him to indulge somewhat in the language of exaggeration, the testimony of so respectable a witness can not be rejected as untrue. "We," says he, "proceed so far in the affectation of pomp and state, as to outdo even bad rulers among the pagans;

[1] Thus Firmilian speaks of "seniores et *præpositi*," and of the Church "ubi *præsident* majores natu."—*Cyprian*, Opera, pp. 302 and 304.

[2] Justin Matryr, Opera, p. 99.

[3] In the days of Origen the episcopal office was not unfrequently coveted for its wealth. Origen, Opera, iii. p. 501. See also Cyprian, Epist. lxiv., p. 240.

and, like the emperors, surround ourselves with a guard that we may be feared and made difficult of access, particularly to the poor. And in many of our so-called Churches, *especially in the large towns*, may be found presiding officers of the Church of God who would refuse to own even the best among the disciples of Jesus while on earth as their equals." [1] In these remarks the writer had doubtless a particular reference to his own Church of Alexandria; but it is well known that elsewhere some bishops in the third century assumed a very lofty bearing. It is related of the celebrated Paul of Samosata, the bishop of Antioch, that he acted as a secular judge, that he appeared in public surrounded by a crowd of servants, and that he took special pleasure in pomp and parade; and yet, had he not lapsed into heresy, his overweening pride would not have brought down upon him the vengeance of ecclesiastical discipline. In the third century the chief pastor of the Western metropolis was known to the great officers of government, and perhaps to the Emperor himself. Decius must have regarded the Roman bishop as a formidable personage when he declared that he would sooner tolerate a rival candidate for the throne, and when he proclaimed his determination to annihilate the very office.[2]

It was not strange that dignitaries who affected so much state soon contrived to surround themselves with a whole host of new officials. Within little more than a century after the rise of Prelacy the number of grades of ecclesiastics was nearly trebled. In addition to the bishop, the presbyters, and the deacons, there were also, in A.D. 251, in the Church of Rome, lectors, sub-deacons, acolyths, exorcists, and janitors.[3] The lectors, who read the Scriptures to the congregation [4] and who had charge of the sacred manuscripts, attract our attention as distinct office-bearers about the close of the

[1] Comment. in Matt., Opera, iii. p. 723.

[2] See Period ii., sec. i., chap. v., p. 322.

[3] Euseb. vi. 43.

[4] Tertullian, "Præscrip. Hæret." c. 41. This office, even in the fourth century, was often committed to mere children—a sad proof that the importance of reading the Word effectively was not duly appreciated.

second century. The sub-deacons had the care of the sacramental cups; the acolyths attended to the lamps of the sacred edifice; the exorcists[1] professed by their prayers to expel evil spirits out of the bodies of those about to be baptized; and the janitors performed the more humble duties of porters or door-keepers. At a subsequent period each of these functionaries was initiated into office by a special form of ordination or investiture. It was laid down as a principle that no one could regularly become a bishop who had not previously passed through all these inferior orders;[2] but when the multitude wished all at once to elevate a layman to the rank of a bishop or a presbyter, ecclesiastical routine was compelled to yield to the pressure of popular enthusiasm.[3]

The great city in which Prelacy originated was the place where these new offices made their first appearance. Rome, true to her mission as "the mother of the Catholic Church," conceived and brought forth nearly all the peculiarities of the Catholic system. The lady seated on the seven hills was already regarded with great admiration, and surrounding Churches silently copied the arrangements of their Imperial parent. In the East, at least one of the orders instituted by the great Western prelate, that is, the order of acolyths, was not adopted for centuries afterward.[4]

The city bishops were well aware of the vast accession of influence they acquired in consequence of their election by the people, and did not fail to insist upon the circumstance when desirous to illustrate their ecclesiastical title. Any one who peruses the letters of Cyprian may remark the frequency, as well as the transparent satisfaction, with which he refers to the mode of his appointment. Who, he seems to say, could doubt his right to act as bishop of Carthage, seeing that he had been chosen by "the suffrage of the whole fraternity"—

[1] Origen makes mention of them, Opera, ii. p. 453; and Firmilian, Cyprian Epist. lxv., p. 306.

[2] Cyprian, Epist. lii., p. 150.

[3] As in the case of Fabian of Rome. Euseb. vi. 29.

[4] Bingham, i. 356, 359.

by "the vote of the people"?[1] The members of the Church enthusiastically acknowledged such appeals to their sympathy and support, and in cases of emergency promptly rallied round the individuals whom they had themselves elevated to power. But, as all the other Church officers were likewise chosen by common suffrage, the bishops soon betrayed an anxiety to appropriate the distinction, and began, under various pretexts, to interfere with the free exercise of the popular franchise. In one of his epistles Cyprian excuses himself to the Christians of Carthage because he had ventured to ordain a reader without their approval. He pleads that the peculiar circumstances of the case and the extraordinary merits of the candidate must be accepted as his apology. "In clerical ordinations," says he, "my custom is to *consult you beforehand*, dearest brethren, *and in common deliberation* to weigh the character and merits of each. But testimonies of men need not be awaited when anticipated by the sentence of God."[2] The sanction of the people should have been obtained before the ordination; but as persecution now raged, it is suggested that it was found inconvenient to lay the matter before them; and Cyprian argues that the informality was pardonable, inasmuch as the Almighty himself had given His suffrage in favor of the new lector; for Aurelius, though only a youth, had nobly submitted to the torture rather than renounce the Gospel.

The ordination of Aurelius under such circumstances was not, however, a solitary case; and there is certainly something suspicious in the frequency with which the bishop of Carthage apologizes to the clergy and people for neglecting to consult them on the appointment of Church officers. In another of his letters he announces to the presbyters and deacons that "on an *urgent occasion*," he had "made Saturus a reader, and Optatus, the confessor, a sub-deacon."[3] Again, he tells the same parties, and "the whole people," that "Celerinus, renowned alike for his courage and his character, has been joined to the clergy, *not by human suffrage, but by the divine favor*";

[1] Cyprian, Epist. lv., pp. 177, 178; xl., pp. 119, 120.
[2] Epist. xxxiii., p. 105.
[3] Epist. xxiv., pp. 79, 80.
[4] Epist. xxxiv., pp. 107, 108.

and at another time he informs them that he had been "admonished and instructed by *a divine vouchsafement* to enroll Numidicus in the number of the Carthaginian presbyters."[1] These cases were afterward quoted as precedents for the non-observance of the law; and from time to time new pretences were discovered for evading its provisions. In this way the rights of the people were gradually abridged; and in the course of two or three centuries, the bishops almost entirely ignored their interference in the election of presbyters and deacons, as well as of the inferior clergy.

New canons relative to ordination were promulgated about the time when the city presbyters ceased to have the exclusive right of electing their own bishop. The altered circumstances of the Church led to the establishment of these regulations. The election of the chief pastor of a great town was often a scene of much excitement, and when several of the presbyters were candidates for the office, it was obviously unseemly that any of them should preside on the occasion. It was accordingly arranged that some of the neighboring bishops should be present to superintend the proceedings. The successful candidate now began to be formally invested with his new dignity by the imposition of hands; and at first, perhaps, one of the bishops, assisted by one of the presbyters of the place, performed this ceremony.[2] But the presbyters soon ceased to officiate at the ordination. At the election, the people and the clergy sometimes took opposite sides; and, in the contest, the ecclesiastical party was not unfrequently completely overborne. It occasionally happened, as in the case of Cyprian,[3] that one of the presbyters was chosen in opposition to the wishes of the

[1] Epist. xxv., p. 111.

[2] Bishops and presbyters continued to ordain bishops in the time of Origen. His "Commentaries on Matthew," written, according to his Benedictine editor, in A.D. 245 (see Delarue's "Origen," iii. Præf) speak of *bishops and presbyters* "committing whole churches to unfit persons and *constituting incompetent governors*."—*Opera*, iii., p. 753.

[3] It would appear that the five presbyters who opposed Cyprian constituted the majority of the presbytery. Cyprian, Epist. xl., pp. 119, 120. See also Sage's "Vindication of the Principles of the Cyprianic Age," p. 348.

majority of the presbytery; or, as in the case of Fabian of Rome,[1] that a layman was all at once elevated to the episcopal chair; and, at such times, the disappointed presbyters did not care to join in the inauguration. The bishops availed themselves of the pretexts thus furnished to dispense with their services altogether. At length the power of admitting to the ministry by the laying on of hands began to be challenged as the peculiar prerogative of the episcopal order.

In many places—perhaps before the middle of the third century—elders were no longer permitted to take part in the consecration of bishops; but Prelacy had not yet completely established itself upon the ruins of the more ancient polity. Sometimes the presbytery itself still discharged the functions of the bishop. After the martyrdom of Fabian in A.D. 250, the Church of Rome remained upwards of a year under its care,[2] as the see was meanwhile vacant; and about the same period we find Cyprian, when in exile, requesting his presbyters and deacons to execute both *his duties* and their own.[3] It was still admitted that presbyters were competent to ordain presbyters and deacons, as well as to confirm and to baptize; and the bishop continued to recognize them as his "*colleagues*" and his "*fellow-presbyters*."[4] It is clear, however, that the relations between them and their episcopal chief were now very vaguely defined, and that the ambiguous position of the parties led to mutual complaints of ambition and usurpation. The Epistles of Cyprian supply evidence that the bishop of Carthage, during a great part of his episcopate, was engaged with his presbyters in a struggle for power;[5] and though he asserted that he was contending for nothing more than his legitimate authority, he was sometimes obliged to abate his pretensions. In one case he complains that, "without his

[1] Euseb. vi. 29.

[2] Cyprian, Epist. xxxi., pp. 99, 100.

[3] Cyprian, Epist. iv., p. 31.

[4] Cyprian, Epist. xxxiii., p. 106; xxxiv., p. 107; lviii., p. 207; lxxi., p. 271; lxxvii., p. 327. Euseb. vii. 5.

[5] Thus we find him going so far as to complain that his presbyters "with contempt and dishonor of the bishop arrogate sole authority to themselves." —*Epist.* ix., p. 48.

permission or knowledge," his presbyter Novatus, "of his own factiousness and ambition" had "made Felicissimus, his follower, a deacon";[1] but still he does not venture to impeach the validity of the act, or refuse to recognize the standing of the new ecclesiastic. Felicissimus seems to have been ordained in a small meeting-house in the neighborhood of Carthage; and as Novatus, who probably presided on the occasion, proceeded in conjunction with the majority of the presbytery, they no doubt considered that, under these circumstances, the sanction of the bishop was by no means indispensable. The manifestation of such a spirit of independence was, however, exceedingly galling to their imperious prelate.

From the manner in which Cyprian expresses himself we may infer that he would not have been dissatisfied had Novatus and the elders who acted with him obtained his *permission* to ordain the deacon Felicissimus. But at this period the bishops were beginning to look with extreme jealousy on all presbyterian ordinations, and were commencing a series of encroachments on the rights of their episcopal brethren in rural districts. These country bishops,[2] who were ministers of single congregations, and who were generally poor and uninfluential, soon succumbed to the great city dignitaries. By a council held at Ancyra in A.D. 314, or very shortly after the close of the Diocletian persecution, they were forbidden to perform duties which they had hitherto been accustomed to discharge, for one of its canons declares that "country bishops must not ordain presbyters or deacons; neither must city presbyters in another parish without the written permission of the bishop."[3]

This canon illustrates the strangely anomalous condition of the Church at the period of its adoption. It takes no notice

[1] Epist. xlix., p. 143. See Neander's "General History," i. 307, and Burton's "Lectures on the Ecc. Hist. of the First Three Centuries," ii. 331. Burton repudiates the attempts of Bingham and others to explain away this proceeding.

[2] They are called so for the first time in the Council of Ancyra. They had before always been called simply bishops. It has been remarked that we never find any *chorepiscopi* among the African bishops, though many of them occupied as humble a position as those so designated elsewhere.

[3] Canon xiii., "Canones Apost. et Concil. Berolini," 1839.

of *country elders*, as the proceedings of such an humble class of functionaries awakened no jealousy; and it degrades country bishops, who unquestionably belonged to the episcopal order, by placing them in a position inferior to that of city presbyters. Sixty years before, or in the middle of the third century, three of these country bishops were deemed competent to ordain a bishop of Rome;[1] but now they are deprived of the right of ordaining even elders or deacons. It is easy to understand why city presbyters were still permitted, under certain conditions, to exercise this privilege. As they constituted the council of the city chief pastor, their influence was considerable; and as they had, till a recent date, been accustomed even to take part in his own consecration, it was deemed inexpedient to tempt so formidable a class of churchmen to make common cause with the country bishops by stripping both at once of their ancient prerogatives. The country bishops, as the weaker party, were first subjected to a process of spoliation. But the recognition of Christianity by Constantine gave an immense impulse to the progress of the hierarchy, and the city presbyters were soon afterward deprived of the privilege now wrested from the country bishops.

The current of events had placed the Church, about the middle of the third century, in a position which it could not long maintain. As the growth of Christianity in towns was steady and rapid, the bishop there rose quickly into wealth and power; but, among the comparatively poor and thinly-scattered population of the country, his condition remained nearly stationary. When Cyprian, in A.D. 256, addressed the eighty-seven bishops assembled in the Council of Carthage, and told them that they were all on an equality, he might have felt that the doctrine of episcopal parity, as then understood, must be given up as indefensible if assailed by the skill of a vigorous logician. Who could believe that the bishop of Carthage held exactly the same official rank as every one of his episcopal auditors? He was the chief pastor of a flourishing metropolis; he had several congregations under his care, and several of his presbyters were

[1] In the case of Novatian. Euseb. vi. 43.

preachers;[1] but many of the bishops before him were ministers of single congregations, and without even one elder competent to deliver a sermon.[2] In point of ministerial gifts and actual influence some of the presbyters of Carthage were, no doubt, far superior to many of the bishops of the council. And who could affirm that Paul of Samosata, the chief pastor of the capital of the Eastern Empire, was quite on a level with every one of the village bishops around him whom he bribed to celebrate his praises? No wonder that it was soon found necessary to remodel the episcopal system. The city bishops had a show of equity in their favor when they asserted their superiority, and their brethren in rural districts were too feeble and dependent effectively to resist their own degradation.

The ecclesiastical title *metropolitan* came into use at the time of the Council at Nice in A.D. 325,[3] and there is reason to believe that the territorial jurisdiction it implied was then first distinctly defined and generally established; but the changes of the preceding three-quarters of a century had been preparing the way for the new arrangement. Many of the country bishops had been reduced to a condition of subserviency, whilst a considerable number of the chief pastors in the great cities had been recognized as the constant presidents of the synods which met in their respective capitals. It is easy to see how these prelates acquired such a position. Talent, if exerted, always asserts its ascendency; and the metropolitan bishops were generally more able and accomplished than the majority of their brethren. They could fairly plead that zeal for the good of the Church prompted them to take a lead in ecclesiastical affairs, and their place of residence supplied them with facilities for communicating with other pastors of which they often deemed it prudent to avail themselves. When the synod met in the metropolis, the bishop of the city was wont to en-

[1] These presbyters were called *Doctores*. Cyprian, Epist. xxxiv., p. 80.

[2] Even at the time of the Council of Carthage held A.D. 397, a bishop had sometimes only one presbyter under his care. See Dupin's account of the Council.

[3] Bingham i., 198; and Beveridge, "Cotelerius," tom. ii., App., p. 17.

tertain many of the members as his guests; and, as he was elevated above most, if not all, of those with whom he acted, in point of wealth, social standing, address, and knowledge of the world, he was usually called on to occupy the chair of the moderator. In process of time that which was originally conceded as a matter of courtesy passed into an admitted right. So long as the metropolitan bishop was inducted into office by mere presbyters, the circumstances of his investiture pointed out to him the duty of humility; but when the most distinguished chief pastors of the province deemed it an honor to take part in his consecration, he immediately increased his pretensions. Thus it is that the change in the mode of episcopal inauguration forms a new era in the history of ecclesiastical assumption.

About the middle of the third century various circumstances conspired to augment the authority of the great bishops. In the Decian and Valerian persecutions the chief pastors were specially marked out for attack, and the heroic constancy with which some of the most eminent encountered a cruel death vastly enhanced the reputation of their order. In a few years several bishops of Rome were martyred; Cyprian of Carthage endured the same fate; Alexander of Jerusalem, and Babylas of Antioch, also laid down their lives for their religion.[1] At the same time the schism of Novatian at Rome, and the schism of Felicissimus at Carthage, threatened the Church with new divisions; and the same arguments which were used, upwards of a hundred years before, for increasing the power of the president of the eldership, could now be urged with equal pertinency for adding to the authority of the president of the synod. In point of fact the earliest occasion on which the bishop of Rome executed discipline in his archiepiscopal capacity was immediately connected with the schism of Novatian; for we have no record of any exercise of such power until Cornelius, at the head of a council held in the Imperial city, deposed the pastors who had officiated at the consecration of his rival.[2] From this date the Roman metropolitan presided at all the ordinations of the bishops in his vicinity.

[1] See Period ii., sec. i., chap ii.. p. 274, and p. 323. [2] Euseb. vi. 43.

To prevent the recurrence of schisms such as had now happened at Rome and Carthage, it was arranged about this period,[1] at least in some quarters of the Church, that the presence or sanction of the stated president of the provincial synod should be necessary to the validity of all episcopal consecrations. There were still, however, many districts in which the provincial synod had no fixed chairman. Hence an ancient canon directs that at the ordination of a member of the hierarchy, "*one of the principal bishops* shall pray to God over the approved candidate."[2] By a "principal bishop" we are to understand the chief pastor of a principal or apostolic church;[3] but in some provinces several such churches were to be found, and this regulation attests that no single ecclesiastic had yet acquired an unchallenged precedence. As the close of the third century approached, the ecclesiastical structure exhibited increasing uniformity; and one dignitary in each region began to be known as the stated president of the episcopal body. In one of the so-called apostolical canons, framed probably before the Council of Nice, this arrangement is embodied. "The bishops of every nation," says the ordinance, "ought to know who is *the first among them*, and him they ought to esteem as their head, and not do any great thing *without his consent*. . . . . But neither let him do anything without the consent of all."[4]

This canon is couched in terms of studied ambiguity, for the expression "the first among the bishops of every nation" admits of various interpretations. In many cases it meant the senior bishop of the district; in others, it denoted the chief pastor of the chief city of the province; and in others again, it indicated the prelate of a great metropolis who had contrived to establish his authority over a still more extensive

[1] Probably in some of the great councils now held at Rome and Antioch. See Euseb. vi. 43, vi. 46. Novatian is spoken of as a person by whom the Church was "split asunder." Euseb. vii. 8.

[2] Bunsen's "Hippolytus," iii. 50. Another canon says: "*He who is worthy out of the bishops* . . . . putteth his hand upon him whom they have made bishop, praying over him."—*Bunsen*, iii. 42.

[3] See chapter viii. of this section, pp. 514, 517. [4] Bunsen, iii. 111.

territory. The rise of the city bishops had completely destroyed that balance of power which originally existed in the Church; and much commotion preceded the settlement of a new ecclesiastical equilibrium. During the last forty years of the third century the Christians enjoyed almost uninterrupted peace; the chief pastors were meanwhile perpetually engaged in contests for superiority; and about this time the bishops of Rome, of Alexandria, and of Antioch, rapidly extended their influence. So rampant was the usurping spirit of churchmen, that even the violence of the Diocletian persecution was not sufficient to check them in their career of ambition. A contemporary writer, who was himself a member of the episcopal order, bears testimony to this melancholy fact. "Some," said he, "who were reputed our pastors, contemning the law of piety, were, under the excitement of mutual animosities, fomenting nothing else but disputes and threatenings and rivalry and reciprocal hostility and hatred, as they contentiously prosecuted their ambitious designs for sovereignty."[1]

What a change had passed over the Christian commonwealth in the course of little more than two hundred years! When the Apostle John died, the city church was governed by the common council of the elders, and their president simply announced and executed the decisions of his brethren: now, the president was transformed into a prelate who, by gradual encroachments, had stripped the presbytery of a large share of its authority. At the close of the first century the Church of Rome was, perhaps, less influential than the Church of Ephesus, and the very name of its moderator at that period is a matter of disputed and doubtful tradition; but the Diocletian persecution had scarcely terminated when the bishop of the great metropolis was found sitting in a council in the palace of the Lateran, and claiming jurisdiction over eight or ten provinces of Italy! These revolutions were not effected without much opposition. The strife between the presbyters and the bishops was succeeded by a general warfare among the possessors of episcopal power, for the constant moderator

[1] Euseb. viii. 1.

of the synod was as anxious to increase his authority as the constant moderator of the presbytery. About the close of the third century the Church was sadly scandalized by the quarrels of the bishops, and Eusebius accordingly intimates that, in the reign of terror which so quickly followed, they suffered a righteous retribution for their misconduct.

Discussions respecting questions of Church polity are often exceedingly distasteful to persons of contracted views, but of genuine piety, for they can not understand how the progress of vital godliness can be influenced by forms of ecclesiastical government.[1] At this period such sentiments were probably not uncommon, and much of the apathy with which innovations were contemplated may thus be easily explained. Besides, if the early bishop was a man of ability and address, his influence in his own church was nearly overwhelming; for as he was the ordinary, if not the only, preacher, he thus possessed the most effective means of recommending any favorite scheme, and of giving a decided tone to public opinion. When a parochial charge became vacant by the demise of the chief pastor, the election of a successor was often vigorously contested; and when an influential presbyter was defeated, he sometimes exhibited his mortification by contending for the rights of his order, and by disputing the pretensions of his successful rival. But as such opposition was dictated by the spirit of faction, it was commonly brief, ill-sustained, and abortive. The young, talented, and aspiring presbyters were strongly tempted to encourage the growth of episcopal prerogative, for each hoped one day to occupy the place of dignity, and thus to reap the fruits of present encroachments. The bishops resisted more strenuously the establishment of

[1] The following observation of a distinguished writer of the Church of England is well worthy of consideration: "The remains of ancient ecclesiastical literature, especially those of the Latin Church, teach us that the corruption of Christianity of which Romanism is the full development, manifested itself, in the first instance, *not in the doctrines which relate to the spiritual life of the individual*, but in those connected with *the constitution and authority* of the Christian society."—*Litton's Church of Christ*, p. 12.

metropolitan ascendency. An ecclesiastical regulation of great antiquity,[1] condemned their translation from one parish to another, so that when the episcopate was gained, all farther prospects of promotion were extinguished; for the place of *first among the bishops* was either inherited by seniority or claimed by the prelate of the chief city. Hence it was that the pastors withstood so firmly all infringements on their theoretical parity; and hence those "ambitious disputes,"[2] and those "collisions of bishops with bishops,"[3] even amidst the fires of martyrdom, over which the historian of the Church professes his anxiety to cast the veil of oblivion.

[1] "Can. Apost.," xiv. "Concil. Nic.," xv. Before the end of the fourth century, Gregory Nazianzen classes this enactment among "the obsolete laws."

[2] Euseb. "Martyrs of Palestine," c. 12.

[3] Euseb. viii. 1.

CHAPTER XI.

SYNODS—THEIR HISTORY AND CONSTITUTION.

THE apostles, and the other original heralds of the Gospel, sought primarily *the conversion of unbelievers.* The commission given to Paul points out distinctly the grand design of their ministry. When the great persecutor of the saints was himself converted on his way to Damascus, our Lord addressed to him the memorable words, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, *to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God,* that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." [1]

When a few disciples were collected in a particular locality, it not unfrequently happened that they remained for a time without any proper ecclesiastical organization.[2] But the Christian cause, under such circumstances, could not be expected to flourish; and, therefore, as soon as practicable, the apostles and evangelists did not neglect to make arrangements for the increase and edification of these infant communities. To provide, as well for the maintenance of discipline, as for the preaching of the Word, they accordingly proceeded to ordain elders in every city where the truth had gained converts. These elders afterward ordained deacons in their respective

[1] Acts xxvi. 16–18.

[2] Such was the case with the churches mentioned Acts xiv. 23, and Titus i. 5.

congregations; and thus, in due time, the Church was regularly constituted.

In the first century Christian societies were formed only here and there throughout the Roman Empire; and, at its close, the Gospel had scarcely penetrated into some of the provinces. It is not to be expected that we can trace historically any general confederation of the churches established during this period, or demonstrate their incorporation; as their distance, their depressed condition, and the jealousy with which they were regarded by the civil government,[1] rendered any extensive combination utterly impossible. At a time when the disciples met together for worship in secret and before break of day, their pastors did not invite public attention to the business of the Church, or assemble in multitudinous councils. But though, in the beginning of the second century, there was no formal bond of union connecting the several Christian communities throughout the world, they meanwhile contrived in various ways to cultivate an unbroken fraternal intercourse. Recognizing each other as members of the same holy brotherhood, they maintained an epistolary correspondence, in which they treated of all matters pertaining to the common interest. When the pastor of one church visited another, his status was immediately acknowledged; and even when an ordinary disciple emigrated to a distant province, the ecclesiastical certificate which he carried along with him secured his admission to membership in the strange congregation. Thus, all the churches treated each other as portions of one great family; all adhered to much the same system of polity and discipline; and, though there was not unity of jurisdiction, there was the "keeping of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

In modern times many ecclesiastical historians[2] have asserted that synods commenced about the middle of the second century. But the statement is unsupported by a single particle of

[1] Trajan regarded with great suspicion all associations, even fire brigades and charitable societies. See Pliny's "Letters," book x., letters 43 and 94.

[2] Such as Mosheim, "Instit." i. 149, 150; Neander, "General History," i. 281.

evidence, and a number of facts may be adduced to prove that it is altogether untenable. There is no reason to doubt that synods, at least on a limited scale, met in the days of the apostles, and that the Church courts of a later age were simply the continuation and expansion of these primitive conventions. We know very little respecting the history of the Christian commonwealth during the former half of the second century, for the extant memorials of the Church of that period are exceedingly few and meagre; and as the proceedings of most of the synods which were then held did not attract much notice,[1] it is not remarkable that they have shared the fate of almost all the other ecclesiastical transactions of the same date, and that they have been buried in oblivion.[2] It is nowhere intimated by any ancient authority that synodical meetings commenced fifty years after the death of the beloved disciple, and the earliest writers who touch upon the subject speak of them as of apostolic origin. Irenæus, the pastor of Lyons, had reached manhood when, according to Mosheim and others, synods were at first formed; he enjoyed the instructions of Polycarp, the disciple of the Apostle John; he was beyond question one of the best informed Christian ministers of his generation; and yet he considered that these ecclesiastical assemblies were in existence in the first century. Speaking of the visit of Paul to Miletus when he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the Church,[3] he says that the apostle then convoked "the bishops and presbyters of Ephesus and of the other adjoining cities,"[4]—plainly indicating that he summoned a synodical meeting. Had an assembly of this kind been a

[1] During the first forty years of the second century, Gnosticism did not excite any great agitation, and as the Church courts were occupied chiefly with matters of mere routine, it is not remarkable that their proceedings have not been recorded.

[2] We have no contemporary evidence to prove that *ordinations* took place in the former half of the second century, and yet we can not doubt their occurrence. An act of ordination implies the existence of a church court of some description.

[3] Acts xx. 17.

[4] "In Mileto enim convocatis episcopis et presbyteris, qui erant ab Epheso et a reliquis proximis civitatibus."—*Contra Hæres.* iii., c. 14, § 2.

novelty in the days of Irenæus, the pastor of Lyons would not have given such a version of a passage in the inspired narrative. Cyprian flourished shortly after the time when, according to the modern theory, councils began to meet in Africa, but the bishop of Carthage himself unquestionably entertained higher views of their antiquity. He declared that conformably to "the practice received from *divine tradition* and *apostolic observance*," [1] "all the neighboring bishops of the same province met together" among the people over whom a pastor was to be ordained; [2] and he did not here merely give utterance to his own impressions, for a whole African synod concurred in his statement. Subsequent writers of unimpeachable credit refer to the canons of councils of which we otherwise know nothing; and though we can not now name the places where these courts assembled, we have evidence that at least some of them were convened before the middle of the second century. Thus, when Jerome ascribes the origin of Prelacy to an ecclesiastical decree, he alludes evidently to a synodical convention of an earlier date than any of the meetings of which history has preserved a record.[3]

Did we even want the direct testimony just adduced as to the government of synods in the former part of the second century, we might on other grounds infer that this species of polity then existed; for apostolic example suggested its propriety, and the spirit of fraternity so assiduously cherished by the early rulers of the Church prompted them to meet together for the discussion and settlement of ecclesiastical questions in which they felt a common interest. But when Christianity was still struggling for existence, it was not in a condition to form widely-spread organizations. The business of the early Church courts was conducted privately, they were attended

[1] Cyprian, Epist. lxviii., § 256.

[2] The new bishop was often chosen before the interment of his predecessor; and even when the senior presbyter was the president, it is probable that the neighboring pastors assembled to attend the funeral of the deceased pastor, and to be present at the inauguration of his successor. See Bingham, i. 150.

[3] See chapter vi. of this Section, p. 476.

by but few members, and they were generally composed of those pastors and elders who resided in the same district and who could conveniently assemble on short notice. Their meetings, in all likelihood, were summoned at irregular intervals, and were held, to avoid suspicion, sometimes in one city and sometimes in another; and, except when an exciting question awakened deep and general anxiety, the representatives of the Churches of a whole province rarely ventured on a united convention. Our ignorance of the councils of the early part of the second century arises simply from the fact that no writer during that interval registered their acts; and we have now no means of accurately filling up this blank in the history. But we have good grounds for believing that Gnosticism now formed the topic of discussion in several synods.[1] The errorists, we know, were driven out of the Church in all places; and how can we account for this general expulsion except upon the principle of the united action of ecclesiastical judicatories? Jerome gives us to understand that their machinations led to a change in the ecclesiastical constitution, and that this change was effected by a synodical decree adopted all over the world[2]—thereby implying that presbyterial government was already in universal operation. Montanism appeared whilst Gnosticism was yet in its full strength, and this gloomy fanaticism created intense agitation. Many of the pastors, as well as of the people, were bewildered by its pretensions to inspiration, and by the sanctimony of its ascetic discipline. It immediately occupied the attention of the ecclesiastical courts, and its progress was arrested by their emphatic condemnation of its absurdities. It is certain that their interference was judicial and decided. "When the faithful held frequent meetings in many places throughout Asia on account of this affair, and examined the novel doctrines, and pro-

[1] The old writer called Prædestinatus speaks of several synods held in reference to the Gnostics before the middle of the second century. He may have had access to some documents now lost, but the testimony of a witness who lived in the fifth or sixth century is not of much value.

[2] "In toto orbe decretum est ut unus de presbyteris electus superponeretur cæteris."—*Com. in Titum.*

nounced them profane, and rejected them as heresy," the Montanist prophets "were in consequence driven out of the Church and excluded from communion."[1]

The words just quoted are from the pen of an anonymous writer who flourished toward the end of the second or beginning of the third century;[2] and, though they supply the earliest distinct notice of synodical meetings, they do not even hint that such assemblies were of recent original. The Paschal controversy succeeded the Montanist agitation, and convulsed the whole Church from East to West by its frivolous discussions. The mode of keeping the Paschal festival had for nearly fifty years been a vexed question, but about the close of the second century it began to create bitter contention. Eusebius has given us an account of the affair, and his narrative throws great light on the state of the ecclesiastical community at the time of its occurrence. "For this cause," says he, "there were synods and councils of bishops, and all, with according judgment, published in epistles an ecclesiastical decree. . . . . There is still extant a letter from those who at that time were called together in Palestine, over whom presided Theophilus, bishop of the parish of Cæsarea, and Narcissus, bishop of the parish of Jerusalem. There is also another letter from those who were convoked at Rome[3] concerning the same question, which shows that Victor was then bishop. There is, too, a letter from the bishops of Pontus, over whom Palmas, as the senior pastor, presided. There is likewise a letter from the parishes in Gaul of which Irenæus was president; and another besides from the Churches in Osroene and the cities in that quarter."[4]

It is obvious from this statement that, before the termina-

[1] Euseb. v. 16. [2] See Routh's "Reliquiæ," ii. 183, 195.

[3] Mosheim ("Commentaries" by Vidal, ii. 105) has made a vain attempt to set aside the Latin translation of this passage by Valesius, as it completely upsets his favorite theory. But any one who carefully examines the Greek of Eusebius may see that the rendering complained of is quite correct. It can not be necessary to point out to the intelligent reader the transparent sophistry of nearly all that Mosheim has written on this subject.

[4] Euseb. v. 23.

tion of the second century, synodical government was established throughout the whole Church; for we here trace its operation in France, in Mesopotamia or Osroene, in Italy, Pontus, and Palestine. This passage also illustrates the progress of the changes which were taking place at the period under review in the constitution of ecclesiastical judicatories. As the president of the presbytery was at first the senior elder, so the president of the synod was at first the senior pastor. At this time the primitive arrangement had not been altogether superseded; for at the meeting of the bishops of Pontus, Palmas, as being the oldest member present, was called to occupy the chair of the moderator. But elsewhere this ancient regulation had been set aside, and in some places no new principle had yet been adopted. At the synod of Palestine the jealousy of two rivals for the presidency led to a rather awkward compromise. Cæsarea was the seat of government, and on that ground its bishop could challenge precedence of every other in the district, but the Church of Jerusalem was the mother of the entire Christian community, and its pastor, now a hundred years of age,[1] considered that he was entitled to fill the place of dignity. For the sake of peace the assembled fathers agreed to appoint two chairmen, and accordingly Theophilus of Cæsarea and Narcissus of Jerusalem presided jointly in the synod of Palestine. In the synod of Rome there was no one to dispute the pretensions of Bishop Victor. As the chief pastor of the great metropolitan Church, he seems, as a matter of course, to have taken possession of the presidential office.

A few years after the Paschal controversy the celebrated Tertullian became entangled in the errors of Montanism, and in vindication of his own principles published a tract "Concerning Fasts," in which there is a passing reference to the subject of ecclesiastical convocations. "Among the Greek nations," says he, "these councils of the whole Church are held in fixed places, in which, whilst certain important questions are discussed, the representation of the whole Christian

[1] See Period ii., sec. iii., chap. v., p. 463.

name is also celebrated with great solemnity. And how worthy is this of a faith which expects to have its converts gathered from all parts to Christ? See how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! You do not well know how to sing this, except when you are holding communion with many. But those conventions, after they have been first employed in prayers and fasting, know how to mourn with the mourners, and thus at length to rejoice with those that rejoice."[1]

Greek was spoken throughout a great part of the Roman Empire, and at this period it was used even by the chief pastors of the Italian capital, so that when Tertullian mentions *the Greek nations*,[2] he employs an expression of equivocal significance. But, no doubt, he refers chiefly to the mother country and its colonies on the other side of the Ægean Sea, or to Greece and Asia Minor. It is apparent from the apostolic epistles, most of which are addressed to Churches within their borders, that the Gospel, at an early date, spread extensively and rapidly in these countries; and, at least in some districts, its adherents must have now made a considerable figure in any denominational census. They were thus emboldened to erect their ecclesiastical courts on a broader basis, as well as to hold their meetings with greater publicity, than heretofore; and, as these assemblies were attended, not only by the pastors and the elders, but also by many deacons and ordinary church members who were anxious to witness their deliberations, Tertullian alleges, in his own rhetorical style of expression, that in them "the representation of the whole Christian name was celebrated with great solemnity."[3] These Greek councils commenced with a

[1] Tertullian, "De Jejun." c. xiii.

[2] "Aguntur præterea *per Græcias* illa certis in locis concilia ex universis ecclesiis."

[3] "Ipsa representatio totius nominis Christiani magna veneratione celebratur." Mosheim argues from these words that the bishops attended these assemblies, not by right of office, but as *representatives of the people!* He might, with more plausibility, have contended that they were held only once a year. "Ista *sollemnia* quibus tunc præsens patrocinatus est sermo."

period of *fasting*—a circumstance by which they were distinguished from similar meetings convened elsewhere, and as they thus supplied him with an argument in favor of one of the grand peculiarities of the discipline of Montanism, it is obviously for this reason they are here so prominently noticed. If, as he contends, these facts were kept so religiously by the representatives of the Church when in attendance on some of their most solemn assemblies, there might, after all, be a warrant for the observance of that more rigid abstinence which he now inculcated. But though this passage of Tertullian is the only authority adduced to prove that councils originated in Greece, it is plain that it gives no sanction whatever to any such theory. Neither does it afford the slightest foundation for the inference that, at the time when it was written, these ecclesiastical convocations were unknown in Africa and Italy. We have direct proof that before this period they not only met in Rome, but that the bishop of the great city had been in the habit of requesting his brother pastors in other countries to hold such assemblies.[1] There is, too, satisfactory evidence that they were now not unknown at Carthage,[2] and Tertullian himself elsewhere refers to the proceedings of African synods.[3] He must have been well aware that they had recently assembled in various parts of the West to pronounce judgment in the Paschal controversy; for the decisions of the Gallic and Roman synods mentioned by Eusebius were published all over the Church; and the reason why he refers to the convocations of the Greeks was, not because such meetings were not held in other

[1] Euseb. v. 24. Hippolytus complains of a bishop of Rome that he was "ignorant of the *ecclesiastical rules*,"—a plain proof, not only that synods were in existence in the West, but also that a knowledge of canon law was considered an important accomplishment. See Bunsen, ii. 223.

[2] Cyprian (Epist. lxxiii.) speaks of a large council held "many years" before his time "under Agrippinus," one of his predecessors. This bishop was contemporary with Tertullian.

[3] In his book "De Pudicitia," c. 10, he speaks of the "Pastor" of Hermas as classed among apocryphal productions "*ab omni concilio ecclesiarum*"—implying that it had been condemned by African councils as well as others.

lands, but because these, from their peculiar method of procedure in the way of fasting,[1] supplied, as he conceived, a very apposite argument in support of the discipline he was so desirous to recommend.

If historians have erred in stating that synods commenced in Greece, they have been still more egregiously mistaken in asserting that the once famous Amphictyonic Council suggested their establishment, and furnished the model for their construction. In the second century of the Christian era the Council of the Amphictyons was shorn of its glory, and though it then continued to meet,[2] it had long ceased to be either an exponent of the national mind, or a free and independent assembly. It is not to be imagined that the Christian community, in the full vigor of its early growth, would all at once have abandoned its apostolic constitution, and adopted a form of government borrowed from an effete institute. Synods, which now formed so prominent a part of the ecclesiastical polity, could claim a higher and holier original. They were the legitimate development of the primitive structure of the Church, for they could be traced up to that meeting of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem which relieved the Gentile converts from the observance of the right of circum cision.

The most plausible argument in support of the theory that the Amphictyonic Council suggested the establishment of synodical conventions is based on the alleged fact that these ecclesiastical meetings were at first held in spring and autumn, or exactly at the times when the Greek political deputies were accustomed to assemble.[3] But this statement, when closely examined, is found to be quite destitute of evidence. Tertullian does not say that the Greek synods met twice a year, and we know that, at least half a century afterward, they assembled only annually. This fact is attested by Fir-

[1] The prevalence of the Montanistic spirit in Asia Minor may account for this.

[2] See Potter's "Antiquities of Greece," i. 106. It consisted of only about thirty members.

[3] See Mosheim's "Commentaries," cent. ii., sect. 22.

milian of Cappadocia, in his celebrated letter to Cyprian. "It is of necessity arranged among us," says he, "that we elders and presidents meet *every year*[1] to set in order the things intrusted to our charge, that if there be any matters of grave moment they may be settled by common advice."[2] The author of this epistle lived in the very country where synods are supposed to have assembled so much more frequently half a century before, so that his evidence demonstrates the fallacy of the hypothesis adopted by some modern historians.

About the beginning of the third century, or at the time when Tertullian wrote, the members of the Greek synods acted on an arrangement not then commonly adopted; for they met together in "fixed places." These "fixed places" were the metropolitan cities of the respective provinces. The pastors and elders had not yet generally agreed to recognize the chief pastor of the metropolitan city as the constant moderator of the synod. In the case of the bishop of Rome the rule was already established; but, in other instances, the senior pastor present was the president. The constant meeting of the synod in the principal town of the province tended, however, to increase the influence of its bishop; and he was at length almost everywhere acknowledged as the proper chairman.[3] At the Council of Nice in A.D. 325 his rights were formally secured by ecclesiastical enactment. About the same date synods commenced to assemble with greater frequency. "Let there be a meeting of the bishops twice a year," says the thirty-seventh of the so-called Apostolical Canons, "and let them examine among themselves the decrees concerning religion, and settle the ecclesiastical controversies which have occurred. One meeting is to be held in the fourth week of the Pentecost, and the other on the 12th day of the month of October."[4]

[1] "Per singulos annos seniores et præpositi in unum conveniamus."

[2] Cyprian, Epist. lxxv., pp. 302, 303.

[3] In Africa, however, this arrangement was not established even in the fifth century. There, the senior bishop still continued president.

[4] This canon differs from the fifth of the Council of Nice, as the latter re-

As soon as the light of historical records begins to illustrate the condition of any portion of the ancient Church, its synodical government is discovered; and though the literary memorials of the third century are comparatively few, they are amply sufficient to demonstrate that ecclesiastical courts, on a tolerably extensive scale, were then everywhere established. About that time the controversy relative to the propriety of rebaptizing heretics awakened much acrimonious feeling, and the subject was keenly discussed in the synods which met for its consideration. Nowhere is any hint given that these courts were of recent origin. Though meeting in so many places in the East and West, and in countries so far apart, they are invariably represented as the ancient order of ecclesiastical regimen. They all appear, too, as co-ordinate and independent judicatories; and though the Roman bishop, as the chief pastor of the Catholic Church, endeavored to induce them to adopt uniform decisions, his attempts to dictate to the brethren in Spain, Africa, and other countries were firmly and indignantly repulsed. There were fundamental principles which they were all understood to acknowledge; these principles were generally embodied in the divine Statute-book; it was admitted that the decisions of every council which adhered to them were entitled to universal reverence; but, though the reservation was scarcely compatible with the genius of catholicity, each provincial convention claimed the right of forming its own judgment of the acts of other courts, and of adopting or rejecting them accordingly.

The most influential synods held before the establishment of Christianity by Constantine, were those which met in the latter part of the third century, to try the case of the famous Paul of Samosata, the bishop of Antioch. The charge preferred against him was the denial of the proper deity of the Son of God; and as he was an individual of much ability and address, as well as, in point of rank, one of the greatest prel ates in existence, his case awakened uncommon interest.

quires the first meeting to be held "before Lent." It is doubtful which canon is of higher antiquity.

Christianity had recently obtained the sanction of a legal toleration,[1] and therefore churchmen now ventured to travel from different provinces to sit in judgment on this noted heresiarch. In the councils which assembled at Antioch were to be found, not only the pastors of Syria, but also those of various places in Palestine and Asia Minor. Even Dionysius, bishop of the capital of Egypt, was invited to be present; but he pleaded his age and infirmities as an apology for his non-attendance.[2] In a council which assembled A.D. 269,[3] Paul was deposed and excommunicated; and the sentence, which was announced by letter to the chief pastors of Rome, Alexandria, and other distinguished sees, was received with general approbation.

All the information we possess respecting the councils of the first three centuries is extremely scanty, so that it is no easy matter exactly to ascertain their constitution; but we can not question the correctness of the statement of Firmilian of Cappadocia, who was himself a prominent actor in several of the most famous of these assemblies, and who affirms that they were composed of "elders and presiding pastors."[4] We have seen that bishops and elders anciently united even in episcopal ordinations; and these ministers, when assembled on such occasions, constituted ecclesiastical judicatories. A modern writer, of high standing in connection with the University of Oxford, has affirmed that "bishops alone had a definitive voice in synods,"[5] but the testimonies which he has himself adduced prove the inaccuracy of the assertion. The

[1] Under Gallienus, about A.D. 260.

[2] Euseb. vii. 27.

[3] This was the third council held on account of Paul, as it is stated in the synodical epistle that Firmilian came *twice* to Antioch and died on his way to it at this time. At the preceding councils Firmilian seems to have presided. See Pusey on the Councils, p. 92, note. Dr. Burton says, "It being generally the custom *for the oldest bishop to preside at these councils*, it is probable that this distinction was given at present to Firmilianus."—*Lect. Ecc. Hist. of First Three Cent.*, ii. 390. The rank of his city could not have given him a claim.

[4] "Seniores et præpositi."—*Epist. Cypriani, Opera*, p. 302.

[5] "The Councils of the Church," by Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D., p. 34. Oxford, 1857.

presbyter Origen, at an Arabian synod held in A.D. 229, sat with the bishops, and was, in fact, the most important and influential member of the convention. In A.D. 230, Demetrius of Alexandria "gathered a council of bishops *and of certain presbyters*, which *decreed* that Origen should remove from Alexandria."[1] About the middle of the third century, "during the vacancy of the see of Rome, *the presbyters of the city* took part in the first Roman council on the lapsed."[2] At the council of Eliberis, held in A.D. 305, no less than *twenty-six presbyters* sat along with the bishops.[3] In some cases deacons,[4] and even laymen, were permitted to address synods;[5] but ancient documents attest that they were never regarded as constituent members. Whilst the bishops and elders *sat* together, and thus proclaimed their equality as ecclesiastical judges,[6] the people and even the deacons were obliged to *stand*. The circular letter of the council of Antioch announcing the deposition of Paul of Samosata is written in the name of "bishops, and presbyters, *and deacons, and the Churches of God*";[7] but there is reason to believe that the latter are added merely as a matter of prudence, and in testimony of their cordial approval of the ecclesiastical verdict. The heresiarch had left no art unemployed to acquire popularity, and it was necessary to show that he had lost the influence on which he had been calculating. It is obvious that the pastors and elders alone were permitted to *adjudicate*, for why were they assembled from various quarters to uphold the doctrine and discipline of the Church, if the people who were themselves tainted with heresy or guilty of irregularity, had the liberty of voting? Under such circumstances, the decision would have been substantially, not the decree of the

[1] Pusey, p. 58. [2] Ibid., p. 66. [3] Ibid., p. 95.

[4] As in the case of Athanasius at the Council of Nice.

[5] As witnesses and commissioners may still be heard by Church courts.

[6] "Graviter commoti sumus ego et collegæ mei qui præsentes aderant et *compresbyteri nostri qui nobis assidebant*."—*Cyprian*, Epist. lxvi., p. 245. "*Residentibus* etiam viginti et sex *presbyteris, adstantibus diaconibus et omni plebe*."—*Concil. Illiberit.*

[7] Euseb. vii. 30.

Church rulers, but of the multitude of the particular city in which they were congregated.

The theory of some modern ecclesiastical historians, who hold that all the early Christian congregations were originally independent, can not bear the ordeal of careful investigation. Whilst it directly conflicts with the testimony of Jerome, who declares that the churches were at first "governed by the *common council of the presbyters*," it is otherwise destitute of evidence. As soon as the light of ecclesiastical memorials begins to guide our path, we find presbyteries and synods everywhere in existence. Congregationalism has no solid foundation either in Scripture or antiquity. The eldership, the most ancient court of the Church, commenced with the first preaching of the Gospel; and in the account of the meeting of the Twelve to induct the deacons into office, we have the record of the first ordination performed by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery of Jerusalem. A few years afterward the representatives of several Christian communities assembled in the holy city and "ordained decrees" for the guidance of the Jewish and Gentile Churches. The continuous development of the same form of ecclesiastical regimen has now been illustrated. This polity was based upon the principle that "in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."[1] At the meetings of the elders, information was multiplied, the intellect was sharpened, the brethren were made better acquainted with each other, and the Christian cause enjoyed the benefit of the decisions of their collective wisdom. The members had been previously elected to office by the voice of the people, so that the Church had pre-eminently a free constitution. And it is no mean proof as well of the intrepidity as of the zeal of the early Christian ministers that, at a time when their religion was proscribed, they sometimes undertook lengthened journeys for the purpose of meeting in ecclesiastical judicatories. They thus nobly asserted the principle that Christ has established in His Church a government with which the civil magistrate has no right whatever to intermeddle. It

[1] Prov. xi. 14.

has been said that the early Christian councils "changed nearly the whole form of the Church," and that by them "the influence and authority of the bishops were not a little augmented."[1] This is obviously quite a mistaken view of their native tendency. The face of the Church was changed at an early period, simply because these councils yielded with too much facility to the spirit of innovation. Had they been always conducted in accordance with primitive arrangements, they could have crushed in the bud the aspirations of clerical ambition. But when the city ministers were rapidly accumulating wealth, their brethren in rural districts remained poor; and when councils began to meet on a scale of increased magnitude, the village and country pastors, who could not afford the expenses of lengthened journeys, were unable to attend. Meanwhile Prelacy established itself in the great towns, and the influence of the city bishops began gradually to preponderate in all ecclesiastical assemblies. When the prelates had once secured their ascendency in these conventions, they made use of the machinery for their own purposes. The people were deprived of many of their rights and privileges; the elders were stripped of their proper status; the village and rural bishops were extinguished; and at length the ancient presbytery itself disappeared. The city dignitaries became the sole depositories of ecclesiastical power, and the Church lost nearly every vestige of its freedom. But, long after the beginning of the fourth century, many remnants of the primitive polity still survived as memorials of its departed excellence.

[1] Mosheim's "Institutes," by Soames, i. 150.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CEREMONIES AND DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCH AS ILLUSTRATED BY CURRENT CONTROVERSIES AND DIVISIONS.

When the Christian community was contending against the Gnostics, other controversies contributed to prejudice its claims in the sight of the heathen. The destruction of the temple of Jerusalem by Titus had prevented the sticklers for the Mosaic law from practicing many of their ancient ceremonies; but there were parts of their ritual, such as circumcision, to which they still adhered, as these could be observed when the altar and the sanctuary no longer existed. In the reign of Hadrian a division of sentiment relative to the continued obligation of the Levitical code led to a great change in the mother Church of Christendom. About A.D. 132, an adventurer, named Barcochebas, pretending to be the Messiah, and aiming at temporal dominion, appeared in Palestine; the Jews, in great numbers, flocked to his standard; and the rebel chief contrived for three years to maintain a bloody war against the strength of the Roman legions. The Israelitish race, by their conduct at this juncture, grievously offended the Emperor; and when he rebuilt Jerusalem, under the name of Aelia Capitolina, he threatened them with the severest penalties should they be found either in the city or the suburbs. Some of the Jewish Christians of the place, anxious to escape the proscription, resolved to give up altogether the observance of circumcision. Others, however, objected to this course, and persisted in maintaining the permanent obligation of the Mosaic ritual. The dissentients, called Nazarenes, formed themselves into a separate community, which obtained ad-

herents elsewhere, and subsisted for several centuries. At first they differed from other Christians chiefly in their adherence to the initiatory ordinance of Judaism; but eventually they adopted erroneous principles in regard to the person of our Lord, and were in consequence ranked among heretics.[1]

In the history of the Church, the Nazarenes occupy a singular and unique position. Their name is among the earliest designations by which the followers of our Saviour were known,[2] and though by many they have been called the First Dissenters, they were the lineal descendants of the most ancient stock of Christians in the world. The rite for which they contended had been practiced in the Church of Jerusalem since its very establishment; the ministers by whom they had been taught had been instructed by the apostles themselves; and all the elders connected with the holy city joined the secession. It is alleged that a number of Christians of Gentile origin, uniting with those of their brethren of Jewish descent who agreed to relinquish the Hebrew ceremonies, chose an individual, named Marcus, for their chief pastor, and that at this period the succession in the line of the circumcision "failed."[3] This statement can not signify that some dire calamity had swept away all the old presbytery of Jerusalem. It indicates that none of its members joined the party whose principles now obtained the ascendency. And yet, though the adherents of Marcus were charged with innovation, they acted under the sanction of apostolical authority. They very properly refused to continue any longer in bondage to the beggarly elements of a ritual long since superseded. Though the seceders could urge that they were of apostolical descent, and that they were supported by ancient custom, it must be admitted, after all, that they were but a company of deluded and narrow-minded bigots. The evangelical pastors of the primitive Church repudiated their zeal for ritualism, and gave the right hand of fellowship to Marcus and his newly-organ-

[1] See Mosheim's "Commentaries," cent. ii., sec. 39; American edition by Murdock.

[2] Acts xxiv. 5.

[3] Euseb. iv. 5.

ized community. The history of the mother Church of Christendom in the early part of the second century is thus fraught with lessons of the gravest wisdom. We see from it that the true successors of the apostles were not those who occupied their seats, or who were able to trace from them a ministerial lineage, but those who inherited their spirit, taught their doctrines, and imitated their example.

Though, in this instance, the disciples at Jerusalem nobly emancipated themselves from the yoke of circumcision, it appears, from a controversy which created great confusion sixty years afterward, that the whole Church was disposed, to some extent, to conform to another Judaic ordinance. The embers of this dispute had been for some time smouldering before they attracted much notice; but, about the termination of the second century, they broke out into a flame which spread from Rome to Jerusalem. The name of Easter[1] was yet unknown, and the Paschal feast, at least in some places, had been then only recently established; but at an early period there was a sprinkling of Jewish Christians in almost every Church throughout the Empire, and they had at length induced their fellow-disciples to mark the seasons of the Passover and Pentecost[2] by certain special observances. The Passover was regarded as the more solemn feast, and was kept by the Christians in much the same way in which it had been celebrated by the Jews before the fall of Jerusalem. A lamb was shut up on a certain day; it was afterward roasted; and then eaten by the brotherhood.[3] The time for this observance, and some

[1] The English name *Easter* is derived from that of a Teutonic goddess (Eostre) whose festival was celebrated by the ancient Saxons in the month of April, and for which the Paschal feast was substituted. See Sharon Turner's "History of the Anglo-Saxons," ii. 15.

[2] Pentecost, called Whitsunday or White-Sunday, on account, as some allege, of the white garments worn by those who then received baptism, was observed as early as the beginning of the third century. Origen, "Contra Celsum," book viii. Tertullian, "De Idololatria," c. 14. We have then no trace of the observation of Christmas. See Kaye's "Tertullian," p. 413. The celebrated Saxon festival of Geol, or Jule, occurred at the period of our Christmas. Sharon Turner's "History of the Anglo-Saxons," ii. 19.

[3] See Mosheim's "Commentaries," by Murdock, cent. ii., sec. 71. Dr.

other circumstantials, now formed topics of earnest and protracted discussion. One party, known as the Quarto-decimans, or *Fourteenth Day Men*, held that the Paschal feast should be kept on the day when the Jews had been accustomed to eat the Passover, that is, on the fourteenth day of the first month of the Jewish year;[1] and they celebrated the festival of the resurrection on the seventeenth day of the month, that is, on the third day after partaking of the Paschal lamb, whether that happened to be the first day of the week or otherwise. The other party strenuously maintained that the eating of the Paschal lamb ought to be postponed till the night preceding the first Lord's day next following the fourteenth day of the first month. They recognized this next Lord's day as the festival of our Saviour's resurrection, and they considered that the whole of the preceding week till the close should be kept as a fast not to be interrupted by the eating of the Passover.

The most determined Quarto-decimans were to be found in Asia Minor, and at their head was Polycrates, the chief pastor of Ephesus. At the head of the other party was Victor, bishop of Rome. The Church over which he presided did not originally observe any such appointment,[2] but some of its members of Jewish extraction were, on that account, dissatisfied; and about the time of the establishment of the Catholic system, the matter was settled by a compromise. It was then arranged that the festival should be kept; but to avoid the imputation of symbolizing with the Jews, the Friday of the

Schaff seems disposed to deny this, but he assigns no reasons. See his "Hist. of the Christ. Church," p. 374.

[1] Even as to this point there is not unanimity—some alleging that our Lord partook of the Paschal lamb on the night preceding that on which it was eaten by the Jews.

[2] This is distinctly asserted by Irenæus. "Anicetus and Pius, Hyginus with Telesphorus and Xystus, neither did themselves observe, nor did they permit those after them to observe it. And yet though they themselves did not keep it, they were not the less at peace with those from churches where it was kept, whenever they came to them, although to keep it then was so much the more in opposition to those who did not."—*Euseb.* v. 24. See also Cooper's "Free Church of Ancient Christendom," p. 247.

Paschal week and the Lord's day following, or the day on which our Saviour suffered and the day on which He rose from the dead, were selected as the great days of observance. This arrangement was pretty generally accepted by those connected with what now began to be called the Catholic Church; but some parties pertinaciously refused to conform. Victor, as the head of the Catholic confederation, deemed it his duty to exact obedience from all its members; and, deeply mortified because the Asiatic Churches persisted in their own usages, shut them out from his communion. But it was soon evident that the Church was not prepared for such an exercise of authority, as the Asiatics refused to yield; and when some of Victor's best friends protested against the imprudence of his procedure, the ecclesiastical thunderbolt proved an impotent demonstration.

The Paschal controversy was far from creditable to any of the parties concerned. The eating of a lamb on a particular day was a fragment of an antiquated ceremonial; and as the ordinance itself had been superseded, the time of its observance was not a legitimate question for debate. Each party endeavored to fortify its own position by quoting the names of Paul or Peter or Philip or John; but had any one of these apostles risen from the dead and appeared in the ecclesiastical arena, he would have rebuked all the disputants for their trivial and unholy wrangling. We have here a notable proof of the absurdity of appealing to tradition. Within a hundred years after the death of the last survivor of the Twelve its testimony was most discordant, for the tradition of the Western Churches, as propounded by Victor, expressly contradicted the tradition of the Eastern Churches, as attested by Polycrates. In this case the apostles were misrepresented. Peter and Paul certainly never taught the members of the Church of Rome to eat the Paschal lamb; for the Jewish temple continued standing till after both had finished their career, and meanwhile the eating of the Passover was confined to those who went up to worship at Jerusalem. Philip and John may have continued to keep the feast according to the ancient ritual till shortly before the ruin of the holy city; and if, after-

ward, they permitted the converts from Judaism to kill a lamb and to have a social repast at the same season of the year, they attached no religious importance to the observance. But now that both parties were heated by the spirit of rivalry and contention, they extracted from tradition a testimony which it did not supply. Vague reports and equivocal statements, handed down from ages preceding, were compelled to convey a meaning very different from that which they primarily communicated; and thus the voice of one tradition was employed to neutralize the authority of another.

It is a curious fact that the custom which now created such violent excitement gradually passed into desuetude. At present there are few places[1] where the eating of the Paschal lamb is continued. But otherwise the practice for which Victor contended eventually prevailed, as the Roman mode of celebration was established by the authority of the Council of Nice. What is called Easter Sunday is still observed in many Churches as the festival of the resurrection. But the institution of such a festival is unnecessary, as each returning Lord's day should remind the Christian that his Saviour has risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that sleep.[2]

This Paschal controversy generated no schism, but other disputes, which subsequently occurred, did not terminate so peacefully. About the middle of the third century disagreements respecting matters of discipline rent the Churches of

[1] The Armenians, the Copts, and others, still observe this rite. Mosheim's "Comment.," cent. ii., sec. 71. As to the continuance of this custom at Rome, see Bingham, v. 36, 37.

[2] Socrates, an ecclesiastical historian of the fifth century, has expressed himself with remarkable candor on this subject. "It appears to me," says he, "that neither the ancients nor moderns who have affected to follow the Jews have had any rational foundation for contending so obstinately about it (Easter). For they have altogether lost sight of the fact that when our religion superseded the Jewish economy, the obligation to observe the Mosaic law and the ceremonial types ceased. . . . . The Saviour and His apostles have enjoined us by no law to keep this feast: nor in the New Testament are we threatened with any penalty, punishment, or curse for the neglect of it, as the Mosaic law does the Jews."—*Ecc. Hist.*, v., c. 22.

Carthage and Rome. At Carthage, the malcontents sought for greater laxity; at Rome, they contended for greater strictness. At that time the *confessors* and the *martyrs*, or those who had persevered in their adherence to the faith under pains and penalties, and those who had suffered for it unto death, were held in the highest veneration. They had been even permitted in some places to dictate to the existing ecclesiastical rulers by granting what were called *tickets of peace*[1] to the *lapsed*, that is, to those who had apostatized in a season of persecution, and who had afterward sought readmission to Church communion. These certificates, or tickets of peace, were understood to entitle the parties in whose favor they were drawn up to be admitted forthwith to the Lord's Supper. But it sometimes happened that a confessor or a martyr was himself far from a paragon of excellence,[2] as mere obstinacy, or pride, or self-righteousness, may occasionally hold out as firmly as a higher principle; and a man may give his body to be burned who does not possess one atom of the grace of Christian charity. There were confessors and martyrs in the third century who held very loose views on the subject of Church discipline, and who gave tickets of peace without much inquiry or consideration.[3] In some instances they did not condescend so far as to name the parties to whom they supplied recommendations, but directed that a particular individual "and his friends"[4] should be restored to ecclesiastical fellowship. Cyprian of Carthage at length determined to set his face against this system of testimonials. He held that the ticket of a martyr was no sufficient proof of the penitence of the party

[1] This system was in existence in the time of Tertullian. See Tertullian, "Ad. Martyr." c. 1, and "De Pudicitia," c. 22.

[2] Cyprian speaks of a confessor spending his time "in drunkenness and revelling" (*Epist.* vi., p. 37), and of some guilty of "fraud, fornication, and adultery." (*De Unit. Ecc.*, p. 404.)

[3] Thus Cyprian says, "Lucianus, not only while Paulus was still in prison, gave letters in his name *indiscriminately* written with his own hand, but *even after his decease* continued to do the same in his name, saying that he had been ordered to do so by Paulus."—*Epist.* xxii., p. 77.

[4] Cyprian, Epist. x., p. 52.

who tendered it, and that each application for readmission to membership should be decided on its own merits, by the proper Church authorities. The bishop was already obnoxious to some of the presbyters and people of Carthage; and, in the hope of undermining his authority, his enemies eagerly seized on his refusal to recognize these certificates. They endeavored to create a prejudice against him by alleging that he was acting dictatorially, and that he was not rendering due honor to those who had so nobly imperilled or sacrificed their lives in the service of the Gospel. To a certain extent their opposition was successful; and, as much sickness prevailed at the time, Cyprian was obliged to concede so far as to consent to give the Eucharist, on the tickets of peace, to those who had lapsed, and who were apparently approaching dissolution. But, soon afterward, strengthened by the decision of an African Synod, he returned to his original position, and the parties now became hopelessly alienated. The leader of the secession was a deacon of the Carthaginian Church, named Felicissimus, and from him the schism which occurred has received its designation. The Separatists chose a presbyter, named Fortunatus, as their bishop, and thus in the capital of the Proconsular Africa a new sect was organized. But the secession, which was based upon a principle thoroughly unsound, soon dwindled into insignificance, and rapidly passed into oblivion.

The schism which occurred about the same time at Rome was of a more formidable and permanent character. It had long been the opinion of a certain party in the Church that persons who had committed certain heinous sins should never again be readmitted to ecclesiastical fellowship.[1] Those who held this principle did not pretend to say that these transgressions were unpardonable; it was admitted that the offenders might obtain forgiveness from God; but it was alleged that the Church on earth could never receive them to communion.

[1] Apostasy in time of persecution was considered a mortal sin. Adultery was placed in the same category. Cyprian, Epist. lii., p. 155. At one time Cyprian himself held the sentiments of the stricter party. See his "Scripture Testimonies against the Jews," book iii., § 28, p. 563.

Cornelius, the bishop of Rome, supported a milder system, and contended that those who were not hopelessly excluded from the peace of God should not be inexorably debarred from the visible pledges of his affection. The leader of the stricter party was Novatian, a Roman presbyter of pure morals and considerable ability, who has left behind him one of the best treatises in defence of the Trinity which the ecclesiastical literature of antiquity can supply. This individual was ordained bishop in opposition to Cornelius; and, for a time, some of the most distinguished pastors of the age found it difficult to decide between these two claimants of the great bishopric. The high character of Novatian, and the supposed tendency of his discipline to preserve the credit and promote the purity of the Church, secured him considerable support; the sect which derived its designation from him spread into various countries; and, for several generations, the Novatians could challenge comparison, as to soundness in the faith and propriety of general conduct, with those who assumed the name of Catholics.

The agitation caused by the Novatian schism had not yet subsided when another controversy respecting the propriety of rebaptizing those designated heretics created immense excitement. Cyprian at the head of one party maintained that the baptism of heretical ministers was not to be recognized, and that the ordinance should again be dispensed to such sectaries as sought admission to catholic communion; whilst Stephen of Rome as strenuously affirmed that the rite was not to be repeated. It is rather singular that the Italian prelate, on this occasion, pleaded for the more liberal principle; but various considerations conspired to prompt him to pursue this course. When heresies were only germinating, and when what was afterward called the Catholic Church was but in process of formation, no one seems to have thought of rebaptizing those to whom the ordinance had already been dispensed by any reputed Christian minister.[1] In the time of

[1] The imposition of hands, by an orthodox pastor, was deemed sufficient to make up what was wanting in the heretical baptism. See Euseb. vii. 2.

Hyginus of Rome, even the baptism of the leading ministers of the Gnostics was acknowledged by the chief pastor of the Western metropolis.[1] The Church of Rome had ever since continued to act on the same system; and her determination to adhere to it had been fortified, rather than weakened, by recent occurrences. As the Novatians had set out on the principle of rebaptizing all who joined them,[2] Stephen recoiled from the idea of deviating from the ancient practice to follow in their footsteps. But Cyprian, who was naturally of a very imperious temper, and who had formed most extravagant notions of the dignity of the Catholic Church, could not brook the thought that the ministers connected with the schism of Felicissimus dispensed any baptism at all. He imagined that the honor of the party to which he belonged was irretrievably compromised by such an admission, and he was sustained in these views by a strong party of African and Asiatic bishops. On this occasion Stephen repeated the experiment made sixty years before by his predecessor, Victor, and attempted to reduce his antagonists to acquiescence by excluding them from his fellowship. But this second effort to enforce ecclesiastical conformity was equally unsuccessful. It only provoked an outburst of indignation, as the parties in favor of rebaptizing refused to give way. This controversy led, however, to the broad assertion of a principle which might not otherwise have been brought out so distinctly, for it was frequently urged during the course of the discussion that all pastors stand upon a basis of equality, and that the bishop of a little African village had intrinsically as good a right to think and to act for himself as the bishop of the great capital of the Empire.

It is very clear that at this time the unity of the Church did not consist in the uniformity of its discipline and ceremonies. The believers at Jerusalem continued to practice circumcision nearly a century after the establishment of Gentile Churches in which the rite was unknown. On the question of rebaptizing

[1] Cyprian, Epist. lxxiii., p. 279, and lxxiv., p. 295.

[2] Cyprian, Epist. lxxiii., pp. 277, 278.

heretics the Churches of Africa and Asia Minor were diametrically opposed to the Church of Rome and other communities in the West. As to the mode of observing the Paschal feast a still greater diversity existed. According to the testimony of Irenæus there was nothing approaching to uniformity in the practice of the various societies with which he was acquainted. "The dispute," said he, "is not only respecting the *day*, but also respecting the *manner* of fasting. For some think that they ought to fast only one day, some two, some more days; some compute their day as consisting of forty hours night and day;[1] and this diversity existing among those that observe it, is not a matter that has just sprung up in our times, but long ago among those before us."[2] When Cyprian refused to admit the lapsed to the Lord's Supper on the strength of the tickets of peace furnished by the confessors and the martyrs, he departed from the course previously adopted in Carthage; and when Novatian excluded them altogether from communion, he acted on a principle not then novel. There was at that time quite as much diversity in discipline and ceremonies among Christians as is now to be found in evangelical Protestant Churches.

As we descend from the apostolic age, the spirit of the dominant body betrays a growing want of Christian charity. There soon appeared a disposition to monopolize religion, and to disown such as did not adopt a certain ecclesiastical Shibboleth. When the great mass of Christians were organized into the Catholic Church, the chief pastors branded with the odious name of heretics all who did not belong to their association. The Nazarenes originally held the great doctrines of the Gospel; but they soon found themselves in the list of the proscribed, and gradually degenerated into abettors of very corrupt principles. Those members of the Church of Carthage who joined Felicissimus acted on principles which the predecessors even of Cyprian had sanctioned, and yet the African prelate denounced them as beyond the pale of divine

[1] In Stieren's "Irenæus," i. 824, there is a different reading of this passage, according to which some continued the fast forty days.

[2] Euseb. v. 24.

mercy. Novatian was not less orthodox than Cornelius; but because he contended for a system of discipline which, though not unprecedented, was deemed by his rival too austere, and because he organized a party to support him, he also was stigmatized with the designation of heretic. The Quartodecimans, as well as those who contended for Catholic rebaptism, must have been classed in the same list, had they not formed numerous and powerful confederations. Thus it was that those called Catholics were taught to cherish a contracted spirit, and to look on all, except their own party, as out of the reach of salvation. Their false conceptions of what properly constituted the Church involved them in many errors and tended to vitiate their entire theology. But this subject, too important to be discussed in a few cursory remarks, is reserved for consideration in a separate chapter.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE THEORY OF THE CHURCH, AND THE HISTORY OF ITS PERVERSION.—CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

"I AM the good Shepherd," said Jesus: "the good Shepherd giveth his life *for the sheep*. . . . . My sheep *hear my voice*, and I know them, and *they follow me:* and I give unto them eternal life, and *they shall never perish.*"[1] The sheep here spoken of are the true children of God. They constitute that blessed community of which it is written, "Christ loved *the Church*, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself *a glorious Church*, not having *spot or wrinkle or any such thing*, but that it should be holy and *without blemish.*"[2]

The society thus described is, in the highest sense, "the holy Catholic Church." Its members are to be found wherever genuine piety exists, and they are all united to Christ by the bond of the Holy Spirit. Their Divine Overseer has promised to be with them "alway unto the end of the world,"[3] to keep them "through faith unto salvation,"[4] and to sustain them even against the violence of "the gates of hell."[5] Though they are scattered throughout different countries, and separated by various barriers of ecclesiastical division, they have the elements of concord. Could they be brought together, and divested of their prejudices, and made fully acquainted with each other's sentiments, they would speedily incorporate; for they possess "the unity of the Spirit,"[6] "the unity of the

[1] John x. 11, 27, 28. [2] Eph. v. 25–27. [3] Matt. xxviii. 20.
[4] 1 Pet. i. 5. [5] Matt. xvi. 18. [6] Eph. iv. 3.

faith,"[1] and "the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God." But these heirs of promise can not be distinguished by the eye of sense; their true character can be known infallibly only to the Great Searcher of hearts; and for this, among other reasons, the spiritual commonwealth to which they belong is usually designated "*the Church invisible*."[2]

The *visible Church* is composed, to a considerable extent, of very different materials. It embraces the whole mixed multitude of nominal Christians, including not a few who exhibit no evidence whatever of vital godliness. Our Lord describes it in one of His parables when He says, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net which was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind; which when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."[4]

In the first century the profession of Christianity was perilous as well as unpopular, so that the number of spurious disciples was comparatively small; and so long as the brethren enjoyed the ministrations of inspired teachers, all attempts to alienate them from each other, or to create schisms, had little success. But still, even when the apostles were on earth, some of the Churches planted and watered by themselves were involved in error, and agitated by the spirit of division. "It hath been declared unto me of you," says Paul to the Corinthians, "that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of

[1] Eph. iv. 13. [2] Eph. iv. 13.

[3] No writer since the Reformation has discussed the subject of the Church with more learning and ability than the Rev. Dr. Hodge, of Princeton. Those who wish to be thoroughly acquainted with all the bearings of the question should consult his "Essays and Reviews," New York, 1857. Also the *Princeton Review*. See also an article of his taken from the *Princeton Review* in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* for Sept., 1854.

[4] Matt. xiii. 47–50.

Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ."[1] The same writer had occasion to mourn over the apostasy of the Churches of Galatia. "I marvel," said he, "that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel. . . . . O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth?"[2] The Church of Sardis in the lifetime of the Apostle John had sunk into an equally deplorable condition, and hence he was commissioned to declare to it, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, *and art dead*."[3]

The circumstances which led to the organization of the Catholic system have already been detailed, and it has been shown that the great design of the arrangement was to secure the visible unity of the ecclesiastical commonwealth. The Catholic confederation was supposed to comprehend all the faithful; and it was expected that, not long after its establishment, it would ring the death-knell of schism and sectarianism. According to its fundamental principle, whoever was not in communion with the bishop was out of the Church. To be out of the Church was considered tantamount to be without God and without hope, so that this test condemned all who in any way dissented from the dominant creed as beyond the pale of salvation. Its assumptions, involving a decision of such grave importance and such dubious authority, were acknowledged with some difficulty; and the question as to the extent and character of the Church led to considerable discussion;[4] but the horror of heresy, which so generally prevailed, strengthened the pretensions of the hierarchy; and at length every candidate for baptism was required to declare, as one of the articles of his faith, "I believe in the holy Catholic Church."[5]

According to one interpretation the sentiment embodied in this profession was perfectly unobjectionable. If by the holy Catholic Church we understand the Church invisible composed

[1] 1 Cor. i. 11, 12. [2] Gal. i. 6, iii. 1. [3] Rev. iii. 1.

[4] Thus, Melito of Sardis wrote a work "On the Church." Euseb. iv. 26.

[5] Apostles' Creed. For another form see Bunsen's "Hippolytus," iii. 25, 27.

of all the true children of God, every devout student of the Scriptures is bound to express his belief in its existence and its excellence. This Church is precious in the eyes of the Lord; it is the habitation of His Spirit; and the heir of His great and glorious promises. But the holy Catholic Church, in the current ecclesiastical phraseology of the third century, had a very different signification. It denoted the great mass of disciples associated under the care of the Catholic bishops, as distinguished from all the minor sects throughout the Empire which made a profession of Christianity. A sincere and intelligent believer might well have scrupled to give such a title to the mixed society thus claiming its application.

It is quite true that there is no salvation out of the Church, if by the Church is meant that elect company which Christ died to redeem and sanctify; but the Word of God does not warrant us to assert that the eternal well-being of man depends on his connection with any earthly society. Even in the days of the apostles, some who were subjected to a sentence of excommunication were the excellent of the earth. "I wrote unto *the Church*," says John, "but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, *receiveth us not*. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words, and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive *the brethren*, and forbiddeth them that would, and *casteth them out of the Church*."[1] This Diotrephes seems to have been some wayward and domineering presbyter who took the lead among his fellow-elders, and who induced them by the influence of commanding talent, combined with superior worldly station, to support him in his wilfulness.[2] But it is very foolish to suppose that the brethren who were thus *cast out of the Church* were thereby eternally undone, for such certainly was not the judgment of the beloved disciple. Faith in Christ, and not

[1] 3 John 9, 10.

[2] He appears, for certain reasons now unknown, to have been dissatisfied with some disciples who had been engaged in missionary work; and he had influence sufficient to procure the excommunication of the brethren who entertained them.

a relation to any visible society, secures a title to heaven. Thousands, admitted into Paradise, like the thief on the cross, have never been baptized;[1] and we might point out numberless cases of individuals in the wonderful providence of God led to a saving knowledge of the truth, who have never had an opportunity of joining a congregation of Christian worshippers. But those who assumed the name of Catholics were continually dwelling on the importance of a connection with their own association; and, assuming that they were *the Church*, they appropriated to themselves whatever they found in Scripture in commendation of its excellence. The promises addressed to the Church in the book of inspiration refer, however, not to any local and visible community, but to the "Church of the first-born which are written in heaven";[2] and the Catholics, by misapplying them, were led to form very extravagant notions of the advantages of their position. The ascription of the attributes of the Church invisible to their own association was the fundamental misconception on which a vast fabric of error was erected. By reason of the indwelling of the Spirit in all believers the Church invisible is *catholic*, or universal, that is, it is to be found wherever vital Christianity exists; for the same reason it is *holy*, every member of it being a living temple of Jehovah; it is also *one*, as one Spirit animates all the saints and unites them to God and to each other; and it is *perpetual*, or indestructible, for the Most High has promised never to leave Himself without witnesses among men, and all His redeemed ones shall be trophies of His grace throughout all eternity. But these attributes were represented as belonging to the Church visible, and this radical mistake became the parent of monstrous delusions. The ecclesiastical writers who flourished toward the end of the second and beginning of the third century exhibit a considerable amount of inconsistency and vacillation when they touch upon the subject;[3] but, half a century afterward, the language

[1] He would be a bold man who would assert that all the pious members of the Society of Friends are in a hopeless condition.

[2] Heb. xii. 23.

[3] See Rothe's "Anfange der christlichen Kirche," p. 575.

currently employed is much bolder and more decided. At that time Cyprian does not hesitate to express himself in the strongest terms of high-church exclusiveness. "*All*," says he, "*are adversaries of the Lord and antichrist* who are found to have departed from the charity and unity of the Catholic Church." [1] "You ought to know that the bishop is in the Church and the Church in the bishop, and *if any be not with the bishop*, that *he is not in the Church*." [2] "The house of God is one, and there can not be salvation for any except in the Church." [3] "He can no longer have God for a Father, who has not the Church for a mother." [4]

Though the Catholics were a compact body, forming the bulk of the Christian population, their system failed to absorb all the professors of the Gospel, or even greatly to check the tendency toward ecclesiastical separation. In their controversies with seceders and schismatics, their own principles were more distinctly defined; and, as they soon found that they were quite an overmatch for any individual sect, their tone gradually became more decided and dictatorial. But the theological position from which they started was a sophism; and, like the movements of a traveller who has mistaken his way, every step of their progress was an advance in a wrong direction. Some of the more prominent errors to which their theory led may here be enumerated.

I. The theory of the Catholic Church recognized an odious ecclesiastical monopoly. Pastors and teachers are "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ"; [5] and yet a sinner may be saved without their instrumentality. The truth when spoken by a layman, or when read in a private chamber, may prove quite as efficacious as when proclaimed from the pulpit of a cathedral. That kingdom of God which "cometh not with observation" is built up by "the Word of His grace"; [6] and

[1] Cyprian, Epist. lxxvi., p. 316.
[2] Epist. lxix., p. 265.
[3] Epist. lxii., p. 221.
[4] "De Unit. Ecc." p. 397. See also Lactantius, "De Vera Sapientia," lib. iv., p. 282.
[5] Eph. iv. 12.
[6] Acts xx. 32.

so long as the Word exists, and so long as the Spirit applies it to enlighten and sanctify and comfort God's children, the Church is imperishable. The evangelical labors of the pious master of a merchant vessel have often been blessed abundantly; and among the tens of thousands afloat on the broad waters, who seldom enjoy any ecclesiastical ministrations, may be found some of the highest types of Christian excellence. Though regularly ordained pastors are necessary to the growth and well-being of the Church, such facts show that they are not essential to its existence. But, according to the Catholic system, they are the veins and arteries through which its very life-blood circulates. All grace belongs to the visible society called the Catholic Church, and of this grace the Catholic ministers have the exclusive distribution. Without their intervention, as the dispensers of divine ordinances, no one can hope to inherit heaven. No other ministers whatever can be instrumental in conferring any saving benefit. Was it extraordinary that individuals supposed to be intrusted with such tremendous influence soon began to be regarded with awful reverence? If the services they rendered were necessary to salvation, and if these services could be performed by none else, they were possessed of absolute authority, and it was to be expected that they should act as "lords over God's heritage."

Under the Mosaic economy none save the descendants of a singe individual were permitted to present the sacrifices or to enter the holy place. In the celebration of the most solemn rites of their religion the Jewish people were kept at a mysterious distance from the presence of the Divine Majesty, and were taught to regard the officiating ministers as mediators between God and themselves. This arrangement was symbolical, as all the priests were types of the Great Intercessor. But every believer may enjoy the nearest access to his Maker, for the Saviour has made all His people "kings and priests unto God."[1] The ministers of the Gospel do not constitute a privileged fraternity entitled by birth to exercise certain functions and to claim certain immunities. They should be ap-

[1] Rev. i. 6.

pointed *by* the people as well as *for* them, and no service which they perform implies that they have nearer access to the Divine Presence than the rest of the worshippers. In the New Testament they are never designated *priests*,[1] neither is their intervention between God and the sinner described as indispensable. But Catholicism invested them with a factitious consequence, representing them as inheriting peculiar rights and privileges by ecclesiastical descent from the apostles. According to Cyprian, "Christ says to the apostles, *and thereby to all prelates who by vicarious ordination are successors of the apostles*, 'He that heareth you, heareth me.'"[2] About the commencement of the third century the pastors of the Church began to be called priests,[3] and this change in the ecclesiastical nomenclature betokens the influence of Catholic principles on the current theology. The Jewish sacrificial system had ceased, and the Hebrew Christians were disposed to transfer to their new ministers the titles of the sons of Levi; but, had not the alteration been in accordance with the spirit of the times it could not have been accomplished. It was, however, justified by Catholicism, as that system set forth the clergy in the light of mediators between God and the people. This misconception of the nature of the Christian ministry generated a multitude of errors. If ministers are priests they offer sacrifice, and are intrusted with the work of atonement. It is true, indeed, that the monstrous dogma of transubstantiation was not yet broached, but forms of expression exceedingly liable to misinterpretation, began to be adopted. Thus, the

[1] If our authorized version of the English Bible is to be regarded as a standard of correct usage, the word priest can not be properly employed to designate a Christian minister. In the New Testament, as stated in the text, a minister of the Word is never called a *priest* (ἱερεὺς), and the latter term when used in reference to an official personage in our English Bible, always denotes an individual *who offers sacrifice*. To call a Gospel minister a priest is, therefore, to adopt an incorrect expression and to insinuate a false doctrine.

[2] Epist. lxix., p. 264.

[3] Thus, Tertullian speaks of the "ordo sacerdotalis." "De Exhor. Cast." c. vii.

Eucharist was styled "a sacrifice,"[1] and the communion-table "the altar."[2] At first such phraseology was not intended to be literally understood,[3] but its tendency, notwithstanding, was most pernicious, as it fostered false views of a holy ordinance, and laid the foundation of the most senseless superstition ever imposed on human credulity.

Every genuine pastor has a divine call to the sacred office, and no act of man can supply the place of this spiritual vocation. God alone can provide a true minister,[4] for He alone can bestow the gifts and the graces required. Ordination is simply the form in which the existing Church rulers endorse the credentials of the candidate, and sanction his appearance in the character of an ecclesiastical functionary. But these rulers may themselves be incompetent or profane, and if so, their approval is worthless; or, by mistake, they may permit wolves in sheep's clothing to take charge of the flock of Christ. The simple fact, therefore, that an individual holds a certain position in any section of the visible Church, is not decisive evidence that he is a true shepherd. But according to the doctrine of Catholicism, whoever was accredited by the existing ecclesiastical authorities was the chosen of the Lord. When certain parties who had joined Novatian were induced to retrace their steps, they made the following penitential declaration in presence of a large congregation assembled in the Western metropolis: "We acknowledge Cornelius bishop of the most holy Catholic Church *chosen by God Almighty* and Christ our Lord."[5] Cyprian asserted that, as he was bishop of Carthage, he must necessarily have a divine commission. Nothing, indeed, can exceed the arrogance with which this imperious prelate expressed himself when

[1] Cyprian, Epist. lxiii., p. 230; lxiv., p. 239.

[2] Cyprian, Epist. lxix., p. 264. Cotelerius, i. 442. The Eucharist is called a sacrifice by Justin Martyr (see his Dialogue with Trypho, "Opera," p. 260) apparently in a figurative sense, but when dispensed by a minister called a *priest*, such language became exceedingly liable to misconception.

[3] In proof of this see Cyprian, Epist. lvi., p. 200, and lxiii., p. 231. In the former place Cyprian says, "Mindful of the Eucharist, the hand which has received *the Lord's body* may embrace the *Lord himself*."

[4] Heb. v. 4; Acts xx. 28, xxvi. 16. [5] Cyprian, Epist. xlvi., p. 136.

speaking of his ecclesiastical authority. To challenge his conduct was, in his estimation, tantamount to blasphemy; and, to dispute his prerogatives, a contempt of the Divine Majesty. Once, in a time of persecution, he retired from Carthage, and he was, in consequence, upbraided by some as a coward; but when a fellow-bishop, Papianus, ventured to ask an explanation of a course of proceeding which betokened indecision, Cyprian treated the inquiry as an insult, and poured out upon his correspondent a whole torrent of invectives and reproaches. He is *God's bishop*, and no one is to attempt, by the breath of suspicion, to stain the lustre of his episcopal dignity. "I perceive by your letter," says he, "that you believe the same things of me, and persist in what you believed. . . . . This is not to believe in God, this is to be a rebel against Christ and against His Gospel. . . . . Do you suppose that the priests of God are without His cognizance ordained in the Church? For if you believe that those who are ordained are unworthy and incestuous, what else is it but to believe that, not by God, or through God, are His bishops appointed in the Church."[1] After indulging at great length in the language of denunciation, he adds, in a strain of irony, "Vouchsafe at length and deign to pronounce on us, and to confirm our episcopate by the authority of *your* hearing, that God and Christ may give *you* thanks, that through you a president and ruler has been restored as well to *their* altar as to *their* people."[2]

II. The Catholic system encouraged its adherents to cultivate very bigoted and ungenerous sentiments. They were

[1] Epist. lxix., p. 262. See also Epist. lv., p. 177. "If any amount of difference of opinion as to the truth or untruth of the teaching of a geographical priesthood will justify separation under another Christian ministry, then it at once ceases to be true that there *can* be but one bishop, or one priest, over any given area in which such differences exist; there then *may* obviously be as many bishops, or as many priests, as there may be different bodies of men differing from each other's teaching in what they deem sufficiently essential points to justify separation."—*Letter from the Duke of Argyll to the Bishop of Oxford*, p. 8.

[2] Epist. lxix., p. 264.

taught to regard themselves as the "peculiar people," and to look on all others, however excellent, as without claim to the title or privileges of Christians. How different the spirit of the inspired heralds of the Gospel! When Peter saw that the Holy Ghost was poured out on men uncircumcised, he recognized the divine intimation by acknowledging the believing Gentiles as his brethren in Christ. Conceiving that God himself had thus settled the question of their Church membership, "he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."[1] But men who professed to derive their authority from the apostle, now showed how grievously they misunderstood the benign and comprehensive genius of his ecclesiastical polity. The dominant party among the disciples had not long assumed the name of Catholics when they sadly belied the designation; for nothing could be more illiberal or uncatholic than their Church principles. All evidences of piety, no matter how decided, if found among the Nazarenes, or the Novatians, or the friends of Felicissimus, were rejected by them as apocryphal. The brightest manifestations of godliness, if exhibited outside their own denomination, only roused their jealousy or provoked their uncandid and malicious criticisms. The Catholic bishops acted as if they moved within something like a charmed circle, and as if a curse rested upon everything not under their own influence. Their proceedings often displayed alike their folly and inconsistency. Tertullian, for example, was a Montanist, and yet he was the writer from whom Cyprian himself derived a large share of his theological instruction. "Give me *the master*," the bishop of Carthage is reported to have said when he called for his favorite author.[2] Thus, an individual who, according to Cyprian's own principles, was beyond the pale of hope, was the teacher with whom he was daily holding spiritual fellowship! The bigotry of the party appears all the more inexcusable when we consider that some of those who differed from them taught the cardinal doctrines of the Gospel, as zealously and as fully as themselves. The Novatians seceded

[1] Acts x. 48. [2] Jerome, "Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers."

from their communion merely on the ground of a question of discipline, and yet the Catholics could not believe that any grace existed among these ancient Puritans. The Novatians might exhibit much of the beauty of holiness, and shed their blood in the cause of Christianity,[1] but all this availed them nothing in the estimation of their narrow-minded antagonists. "Let no one think," says Cyprian, "that they can be good men who leave the Church."[2] "He can never attain to the kingdom who leaves her with whom the kingdom shall be."[3] "He can not be a martyr who is not in the Church."[4] Every man not blinded by prejudice might well have suspected the soundness of a theory sustained by such brazen recklessness of assertion.

III. Nothing, however, more clearly revealed the anti-evangelical character of the Catholic system than its interference with the claims of the Word of God. The Gospel commends itself by the light of its own evidence. The official rank of the preacher can not add to its truth, neither can the corrupt motives which may prompt him to proclaim it, impair its authority. As a revelation from heaven, it possesses a title to consideration irrespective of any individual, or any Church; and God honors His own communication even when delivered by a very unworthy messenger.[5] "Some indeed," says Paul, "preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some also of good-will. . . . . What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."[6] But Catholicism taught its partisans to cherish very different feelings, for they were instructed to believe that the Gospel itself was without efficacy when promulgated by a minister who did not belong to their own party. They could not challenge a single flaw in the creed of Novatian,[7] and yet they stoutly maintained that his preaching was useless, and

[1] Some of those called heretics had many martyrs. Euseb. v. 16.
[2] "De Unit. Ecc." Opera, p. 399.
[3] "De Unit. Ecc." p. 401.
[4] "De Unit. Ecc." p. 401.
[5] Jeremiah xxiii. 21, 22.
[6] Phil. i. 15, 18. See also Mark ix. 38, 39.
[7] Cyprian himself makes this admission. Epist. lxxvi., p. 319.

that the baptism he dispensed was worthless as the ablutior of a heathen. "You should know," says Cyprian, "that *we ought not even to be curious as to what Novatian teaches, since he teaches out of the Church.* Whosoever he be, and whatsoever he be, he is not a Christian who is not in the Church of Christ."[1] "When the Novatians say, 'Dost thou believe remission of sins and eternal life by the Holy Church?' they lie in their interrogatory, since they *have no Church.*"[2]

Strange infatuation! Who could have anticipated that one hundred and fifty years after the death of the Apostle John, such miserable and revolting bigotry would be current? The Scriptures teach us that, in the salvation of sinners, ministers are nothing, and the Gospel everything. "Whosoever," says Paul, "shall call upon the name of the Lord *shall be saved.* . . . . Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by *the Word of God.*"[3] Cyprian did not understand such doctrine. He imagined that the Word of God had no power except when issuing from the lips of the ministers of his own communion. The Catholic Church must put its seal upon the Gospel to give it currency. Without this stamp it was all in vain to announce it to a world lying in wickedness. The Catholic pastor might be a man without ability; he might be comparatively ignorant and of more than suspicious integrity; and yet the King of the Church was supposed to look down with complacency on all the official acts of this wretched hireling, while no dew of heavenly influence rested on the labors of a pious and accomplished Novatian minister! When men like Cyprian were prepared to acknowledge such folly, it was not strange that a darkness which might be felt soon settled down upon Christendom.

In the preceding pages the history of the ancient Church for the first three centuries has passed under review, and a few general observations may be not inappropriately appended to this concluding chapter. The details here furnished supply

[1] Epist. lii., p. 156. [2] Epist. lxxvi., p. 319. [3] Rom. x. 13, 17.

ample evidence that Christianity was greatly corrupted long before the conversion of Constantine. Much of the superstition which has since so much disfigured the Church was, indeed, yet unknown. During the first three centuries we find no recognition of the mediatorship of Mary, or of the dogma of her immaculate conception,[1] or of the worship of images, or of the celebration of divine service in an unknown tongue, or of the infallibility of the Roman bishop. But the germs of many dangerous errors were distinctly visible, and when the sun of Imperial favor began to shine upon the Christians, these errors rapidly reached maturity. The Eucharistic bread and wine were viewed with superstitious awe, and language was applied to them calculated to bewilder and confound. A system of penitential discipline alien to the spirit of the New Testament was already in existence; rites and ceremonies unknown in the apostolic age made their appearance; and in the great towns a crowd of functionaries, whom Paul and Peter would have refused to own, added to the pomp of public worship. Some imagine that in the times of Tertullian and of Cyprian we may find the purest faith in the purest form, but a more intimate acquaintance with the history of the period is quite sufficient to dispel the delusion. A little consideration may convince us that, in the second or third century, we can scarcely expect to see either the most brilliant displays of the light of truth or the most attractive exhibitions of personal holiness. The waters of life gushed forth, clear as crystal, from the Rock of Ages; but, as their course was through the waste wilderness of a degenerate world, they were soon defiled by its pollutions; and it was not till the desert began "to rejoice and blossom as the rose," that the stream flowed smoothly in the channel it had wrought, and partially recovered its native purity. At the present day we do not expect as high a style of Christianity in a convert from idolatry as in an individual trained from infancy under the care of enlight-

[1] Tertullian did not hold the doctrine of her perpetual virginity. See "De Monog.," c. 8, and "De Carne Christi," c. 23. Neither did he believe in her immaculate conception. See Kaye's "Tertullian," p. 338, and Jerome's "Tract against Helvidius." Du Pin, i. 346.

ened and godly parents. By judicious culture the graces of the Spirit, as well as the fruits of the earth, may be improved; but when a section of the open field of immorality and ignorance is first added to the garden of the Lord, it may not forthwith possess all the fertility and loveliness of the more ancient plantation.[1] A large portion of the early disciples had once been heathens; they had to struggle against evil habits and inveterate prejudices; they were surrounded by corrupting influences; and, as they had not the same means of obtaining an exact and comprehensive knowledge of the Gospel as ourselves, we can not reasonably hope to find among them any very extraordinary measure either of spiritual wisdom or of consistent piety.

When the Church toward the middle of the second century was sorely harassed by divisions, its situation was extremely critical and embarrassing. Christianity had appeared among men bearing the olive branch of peace, and had proposed to supersede the countless superstitions of the heathen by a faith binding the human race together in one great and harmonious family. How mortified, then, must have been its friends when Basilides, Marcion, Valentine, Cerdo, Mark, and many others began to propagate their heresies; and when it was to be feared that the divisions of the Church would prove as numerous as the religions of paganism! Had the ministers of the Gospel girded themselves for the emergency; had they boldly encountered the errorists, and vanquished them with weapons drawn from the armory of the Word; they would have approved themselves worthy of their position, and acquired strength for future conflicts. But whilst they did not altogether neglect an appeal to Scripture, they were tempted in an evil hour to think of sequestrating their own freedom, in the hope of overwhelming heresy with the vigor of an ecclesiastical despotism. By investing their chairman with arbitrary power and by making communion with this functionary the criterion of discipleship, they sanctioned a perilous ar-

[1] One of the most distinguished and sagacious of modern missionaries has called attention to this fact. See Livingstone's "Missionary Travels in South Africa," p. 107.

rangement and indorsed a vicious principle. From this date we trace the commencement of a career of defection. The bishop and the Church began to supplant Christ and a knowledge of the Gospel. Bigotry advanced apace, and conscience found itself in bondage.

The establishment of the hierarchical system, though imparting, as was thought, greater unity to the structure of the Church, did not really invigorate its constitution. The spiritual commonwealth is very different from any merely earthly organization, for it has no statute-book but the Bible, and it owes explicit obedience to no ruler but the King of Zion. Freedom of conscience, in obedience to the Word, is the heritage of all its members; and every one of them is bound to exercise the privilege, and to resist its violation. Its unity consists, not in adhesion to any visible head, but in cordial submission to its one great Lord and Sovereign. When a change was made in its primitive framework, its essential unity was impaired. After the elders had handed over a considerable share of their authority to their president, they were not expected to take such a deep interest in its government as when they were themselves individually responsible for its official administration. They still, indeed, acted as his counsellors, but as they no longer held the independent footing they had once occupied, they could neither speak nor act so freely and so energetically as before. Thus, when one member of the ecclesiastical body was permitted to attain an unnatural magnitude, others ceased to perform their proper functions, and the whole eventually became diseased and misshapen. And the new arrangement entirely failed in checking the growth of the errorists. After its adoption heresies sprung up as rapidly as ever, and the multitude of its sects continued to be the scandal of Christianity even in the time of Constantine.[1] Their suppression is to be attributed, not to the potency of Prelacy, but to the stern intolerance of

[1] Maximian, in his famous edict of toleration, lays great stress on this circumstance. "De Mortibus Persecutorum," c. 34. See also Euseb. viii. 17.

the Imperial laws. By the rigid enforcement of conformity the Catholic Church at length reigned without a rival.

The extant ecclesiastical writings of the third century demonstrate that the doctrine of the visible unity of the Church, as represented by the Catholic hierarchy, already formed a prominent part of the current creed. As there is "one God, one Christ, and one Holy Ghost," it was affirmed that there could be but "one bishop in the Catholic Church."[1] This theory was inconsistent with the fact that there were many bishops in almost every province of the Empire; but the ingenuity of churchmen attempted a solution of the difficulty. It was asserted that the whole episcopacy should be regarded as one, and that each bishop constituted an integral part of the grand unit. "The episcopacy is one," says Cyprian, "it is a whole in which each enjoys full possession."[2] "There is one Church from Christ throughout the whole world divided into many members, and *one episcopate* diffused throughout an harmonious multitude of many bishops."[3]

We have seen that the Roman prelate was already recognized as the centre of ecclesiastical unity. A misunderstood passage in the Gospel of Matthew[4] was supposed to sanction this ecclesiastical primacy. "There is," said the bishop of Carthage, "one God, and one Christ, and one Church, and *one chair founded by the Word of the Lord on the Rock*."[5] Though the Roman chief pastor was theoretically only the first among the Catholic bishops, his zeal for uniformity had now more than once interrupted the peace of the Christian community. The erection of a new capital and the subsequent dismemberment of the Empire considerably affected his position; but, within a certain sphere, he steadily endeavored to carry out the idea of Catholic unity. The doctrine reached its highest point of development after the lapse of upwards of a thousand years. Then the bishop of Rome had become a sovereign prince, and was the acknowledged ruler of a vast and magnifi-

[1] Cornelius to Cyprian, Epist. xlvi., p. 136.

[2] "De Unit. Eccles.," p. 397.

[3] Epist. lii., p. 156.

[4] Matt. xvi. 18.

[5] Cyprian, Epist. xl., pp. 120, 121.

cent hierarchy. Then, he swayed his spiritual sceptre over all the tribes of Western Christendom. Then, verily, uniformity had its day of triumph; for, with some rare exceptions, wherever the stranger travelled throughout Europe, he found the same order of divine service, and saw the ministers of the sanctuary arrayed in the same costume, and practicing even the same gestures. Then, wherever he entered a sacred edifice, he heard the same language, and listened to the same prayers expressed in the very same phraseology. But what was meanwhile the real condition of the Church? Was there love without dissimulation, and the keeping of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace? Nothing of the kind. Never could it be said with greater truth of the people of the West that they were "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." There were wars and rumors of wars; nation rose up against nation and kingdom against kingdom; and the Pope was generally the cause of the contention. The very man who claimed to be the centre of Catholic unity was the grand fomenter of ecclesiastical and political disturbance. The Sovereign Pontiff, and the Catholic princes with whom he was engaged in deadly feuds, were equally faithless, restless, and implacable. Freedom of thought was proscribed, and the human mind was placed under the most exacting and intolerable tyranny by which it was ever oppressed.

The mutilation of this Dagon of hierarchical unity is one of the many glorious results of the great Reformation. The sooner the remaining fragments of this idol are crushed to atoms, the better for the peace and freedom of Christendom. The unity of the Church can not be achieved by the iron rod of despotism, neither can the communion of saints be promoted by the sacrifice of their rights and privileges. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."[1] Christ alone can draw all men unto Him. The real unity of His Church is, not any merely ecclesiastical cohesion, but a unity of faith, of hope, and of affection. It is the fellowship of Christian free-

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 17.

men walking together in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. It is the attraction of all hearts to one heavenly Saviour, and the submission of all wills to one holy law. Looking at the past condition or the present aspect of society, we may think the difficulties in the way of such unity altogether insurmountable; but it shall, in due time, be brought about by Him "who doeth great things and unsearchable, marvellous things without number." Its realization will present the most delightful and impressive spectacle that the earth has ever seen. "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; *and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.*"[1] "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice, with the *voice together shall they sing;* for *they shall see eye to eye*, when the Lord shall bring again Zion."[2] "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall there be *one Lord, and His name one.*"[3] AMEN.

[1] Isa. xl. 4, 5. [2] Isa. lii. 8. [3] Zech. xiv. 9.

THE END.

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